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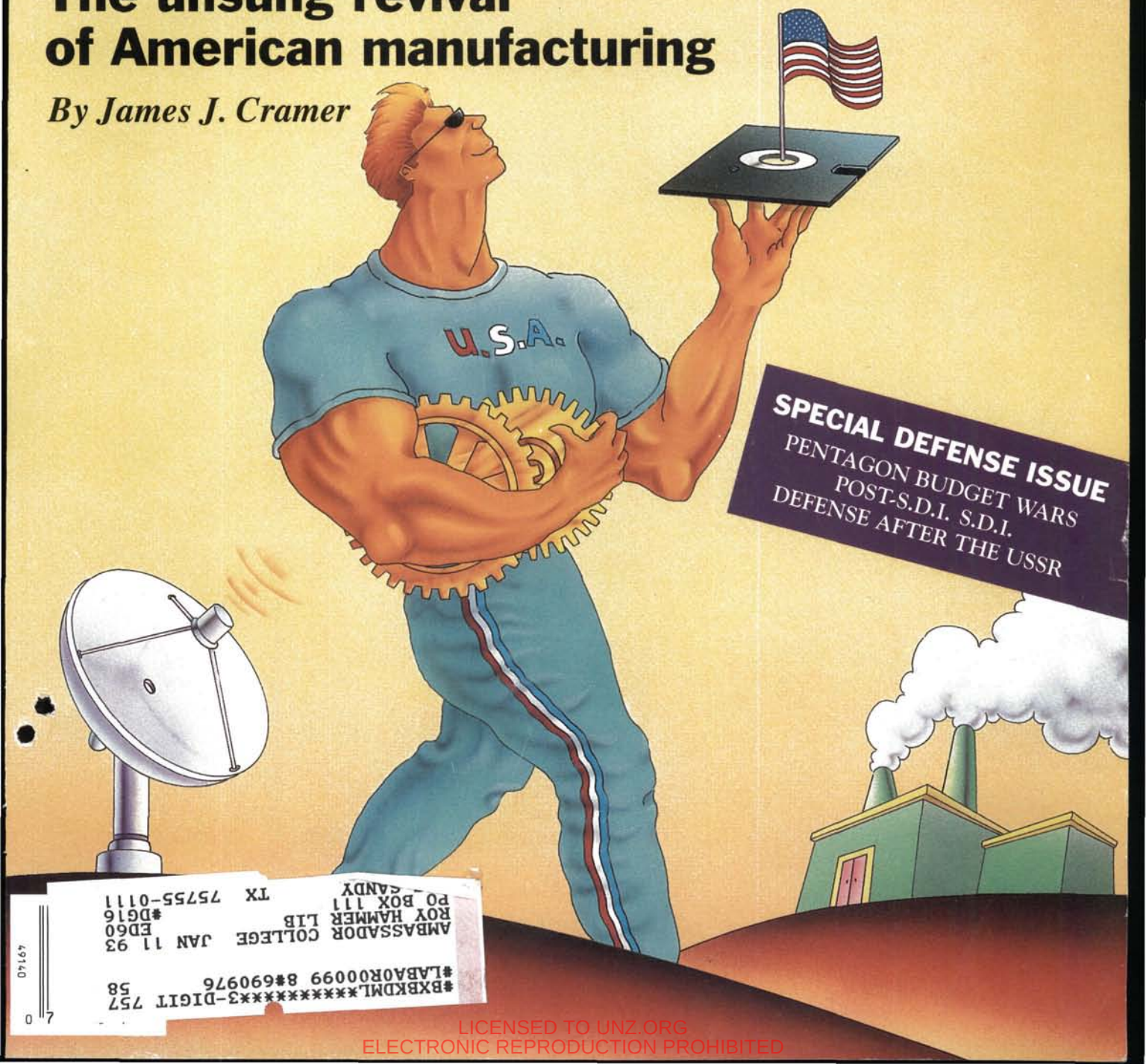

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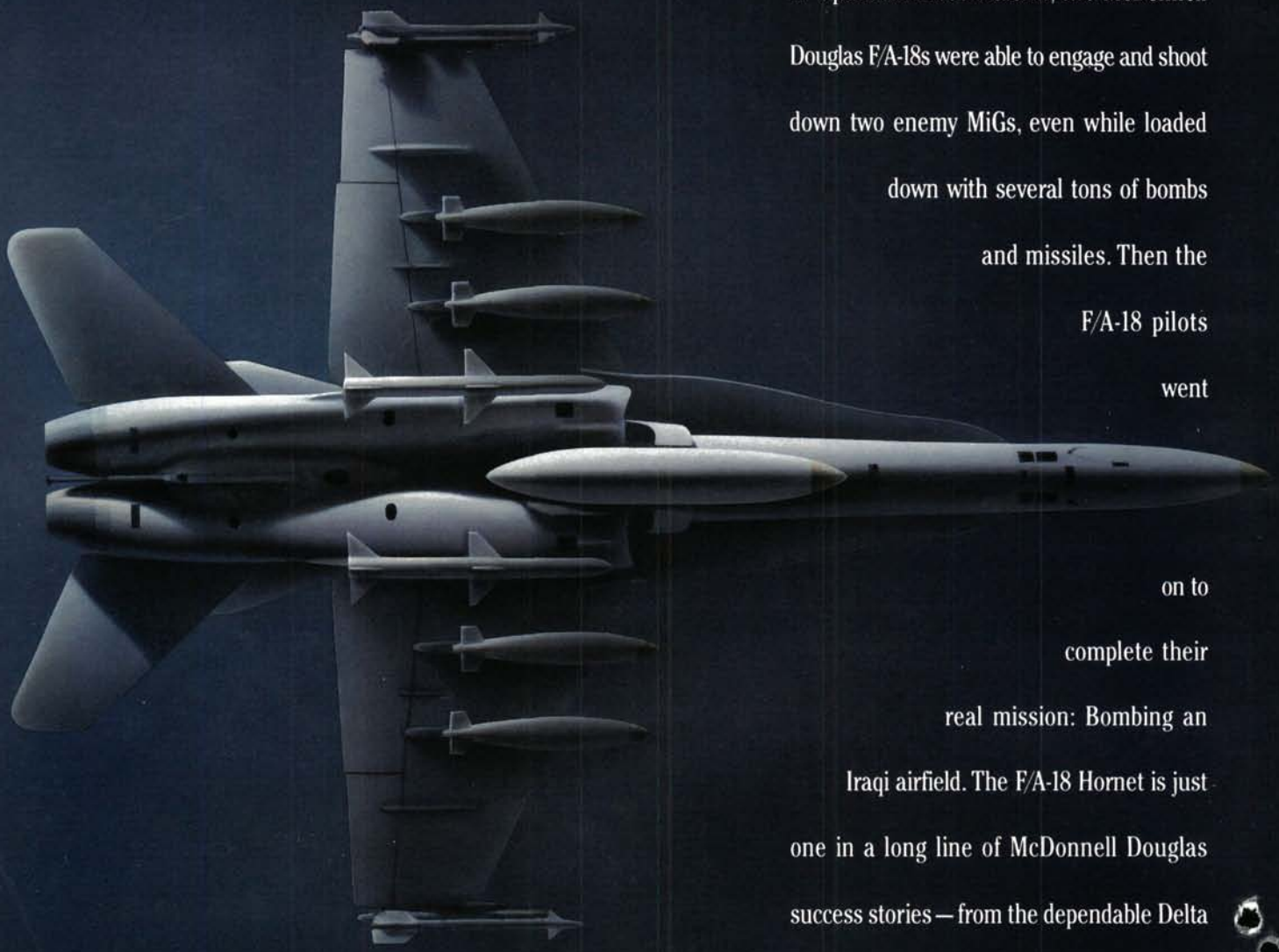

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APRIL 27, 1992

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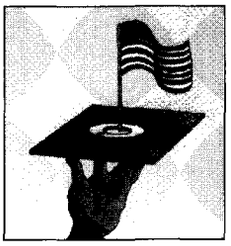

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CORRESPONDENCE

Trade off

To the editors:

Several references to me in John B. Judis's "The Tariff Party" (March 30) are incorrect. My advocacy of a strategic economic policy for the United States did not result, as Judis states, from a meeting with Senator John East and economist William Hawkins. I never met Senator East at any time. I met Hawkins, my former colleague, when he was an instructor at Radford University.

The roots of the strategic economic policy movement go back to the 1970s. I started to write newspaper columns about America's industrial decline after I observed derelict industrial areas in the Northeast. In 1981 I urged a new trade policy in a speech at the University of Colorado, which was turned into an article for *National Review* later that year, and was followed by a string of addresses at universities and economic forums throughout the 1980s. My thinking was influenced by Professor John Culbertson, a distinguished economist at the University of Wisconsin.

It is not correct for Judis to say that I "prodded" Pat Buchanan to move from the threat of foreign lobbying to the threat of foreign imports. I admire and respect Buchanan. I am delighted that he is tremendously concerned about how Americans will be employed as foreign trade offensives destroy America's industrial base. But I have not talked to Buchanan about this subject. Our correspondence over fifteen years or more consists of a few short letters. Perhaps he has read some of my writings.

ANTHONY HARRIGAN
Sewanee, Tennessee

John B. Judis replies:

I did not write that Harrigan's rejection of the free trade ideology dated from his meeting with Hawkins, or that East himself met with the two men. As Hawkins has confirmed, the meeting was set up by East's administrative assistant. In an interview two years ago Harrigan told me that Hawkins and Paul Seabury's analyses had been important to his own thinking.

To the editors:

Between the two of them, Fred Barnes ("Heir Apparent," March 30) and John B. Judis do a good job of sketching out trade policy tiffs within the GOP. Unfortunately, both make the mistake of taking the Reagan administration's free trade rhetoric at face value. Although he talked up the benefits of free trade, Ronald Reagan did not roll back the large canon of U.S. protectionist legislation. Remember, it was during Reagan's watch that we blustered Japanese automakers into an export cap, thereby spurring them to launch high-dollar, high-margin lines such as Lexus, Acura, and Infiniti. Another good reminder is the $6 million fine K-Mart Corp. paid in August 1990 for failing to fork out the government-set price for imported clothing during the Reagan years 1982 through 1986. The simple fact is that U.S. trade policy has been de jure protectionist throughout the Reagan-Bush era and will remain so no matter what machinations take place between now and November.

JEFF A. TAYLOR
Silver Spring, Maryland

Women's work

To the editors:

In her review of books by Susan Faludi and Gloria Steinem ("The Feminist Mystique," March 16), Karen Lehrman points out, with the sensitivity of an insider, the very real state of exhaustion of "first-stage" feminism and explores the various forms that "second-stage" and even "third-stage" feminism might take. Nonetheless, in this wider world of feminist possibilities, there is one class of women that is still beyond the pale—the full-time mothers. Lehrman's list of "family" issues (child care, parental leaves, flextime) is irrelevant for full-time mothers. Her final reference to these women ("Women should feel as free to have five children and bake cookies all day as to re-create themselves through plastic surgery, wear bustiers, skin-tight miniskirts, and spiked heels, and read hard-core porn magazines") promotes an appalling stereotype of Mom as a tender-hearted creature too dim to be bothered by the troubles of the real world.

As a father of four deeply involved in raising my children (*I* do the diaper bucket), I have watched my wife develop her own strong sense of self as a full-time mother, unencumbered by feminist baggage. Like any first-rate woman in the work force, she has succeeded at her job by enlarging its scope, putting her own imprint on it, and generally doing a bang-up job. And surprisingly, much of her work would be viewed as politically correct by the larger women's movement. All of our children were born at home, for example, thereby giving her full control over her body during this

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most powerful moment in a woman's life. She has become an expert in breast-feeding, a much-neglected renewable resource. She homeschools our children in a way that promotes an independence of thought and sure sense of self. And because she works in the home, we were able to adopt an older child with a background of physical abuse.

But although my wife promotes, by action if not by rhetoric, a number of issues dear to the hearts of feminists, she ea[illegible]is nothing but condescension, if not downright disdain, from the formal women's movement. The larger, and sweeter, irony is that she has earned the satisfaction of a well-done job as an individual, not just as a woman, in precisely the way that Lehrman promotes as her "third stage." The future is already with us, if only the feminists had the imagination to notice.

STEVEN HOTOVY
Dryden, New York

Baker's frustrations

To the editors:

I would like to propose a fourth interpretation for the remark cited in "Same To You, Buddy" (March 30). If the comment is true, the expression may have been a venting of total frustration experienced by James Baker because of continued expansion by Israel. The comment may be inexcusable and tasteless but not as sinister as you make it out to be. I fail to understand how Baker's comment about a foreign government "reflects a political distaste for American Jews that walks right up to the edge of anti-Semitism." Is every public figure who disagrees with the Israeli government to be labeled "anti-Semitic"?

SHIRLEY JO DICKENS-WILSON
Sunland, California

Master of revels

To the editors:

In "Arts and Crafts" (TRB, March 16), Michael Kinsley writes that "much if not most of the art we treasure from past centuries ... even some of Shakespeare's p[illegible]ys—was created under government (or official church) sponsorship."

Kinsley, however, did not care to specify the nature of Shakespeare's "sponsorship," or the strings with which it came attached. As Sir E. K. Chambers writes in *The Elizabethan Stage*, at various times Shakespeare wrote for three theater companies: Lord Strange's Men, The Earl of Pembroke's Men, and The Lord Chamberlain's Men. The Lord Chamberlain was a paid officer of the Palace of Queen Elizabeth I, responsible for all theatrical activities in England, but also in charge of the queen's entertainment. The plays Shakespeare wrote for The Lord Chamberlain *had* to be approved for production by the Master of Revels, another Palace official directly under The Lord Chamberlain's authority. In fact, the Master of Revels was legally obligated to review and approve all plays before their production. This practice began in 1581 under a patent from the queen, which declared in general terms that he was appointed "of all such shows, plays, players, and playmakers, together with their playing places, to order and reform, authorize, and put down as shall be thought meet or unmeet unto himself and his said deputy in that behalf."

GARY BRUCE GOLDSTEIN
Kew Gardens, New York

Total recall

To the editors:

Terence Emmons is mistaken in believing that the concept of totalitarianism was "in large measure a product of the cold war" ("The Abusable Past," March 9). In fact, the term was coined in 1923 in Italy by the liberal Giovanni Amendola to stress the differences between fascism and traditional authoritarianism. Mussolini later adopted it for his own purposes. In the 1930s and 1940s German political scientists, many of whom ended up in this country (Sigmund Neumann, Carl J. Friedrich, Karl Loewenstein, Hannah Arendt), applied it first to the Nazi regime and then to Communist Russia.

The reason for its great popularity among post-Communist Russians is that they find the totalitarian model describes and explains what they had experienced. It is for the same reason, as he notes, that they scorn Western historiographic "revisionism." For what has passed for "revisionism" in the West was really nothing more than a reiteration of official Communist historiography with its central claim that October 1917 was a mass movement rather than a coup d'état. This is why I too chose to ignore it in my *Russian Revolution*. I felt no need to refer to "two decades' worth of revisionist scholarship on the social background to the Bolshevik takeover" since every book on the subject published in the USSR after 1917 had upheld the same fictitious version of events.

RICHARD PIPES
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Terence Emmons replies:

I do not think I was mistaken in my remark about the connection between the totalitarian thesis and the cold war. I am perfectly aware that the pedigree of the term "totalitarianism" antedates World War II. I wrote that "the *rise* ... of the concept ... was in large measure a product of the cold war." (The first draft of this passage, before the editor's blue pencil got at my loquacities, read: "The ascendancy of the concept in American academia ...")

With all respect for Pipes's erudition and judgment, it seems to me that his aversion for apologetic echoes of Soviet propaganda in Western scholarship (they are present in some measure in many works) has caused him to neglect seriously the fact that the Bolshevik coup of October 1917 took place in the midst of a *social revolution* that had by that time largely destroyed traditional authority structures in civil society and the military. Without an appreciation of these processes of disintegration we cannot understand either why the minoritarian Bolsheviks were able to seize power in Petrograd in October 1917 (why were they unable to do so in July?) or, more important, why they were able to hold onto it there, to extend it to the rest of the country, and to build a new, in many ways unprecedented, structure of authority on the ruins of the old. Numerous "revisionist" works are illuminating on this score, regardless of what they may (or may not) have to say regarding Bolshevik "democracy" or the "mass character" of the October revolution.

Sellout

To the editors:

I was so stunned at the Hemlock Society's commercialization of an already trivialized issue (Notebook, "Kevorkian's Five & Dime," April 6) that I nearly soiled my New Republic Polo Shirt.

ALVIN HUTCHINSON
Baltimore, Maryland

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FROM WASHINGTON

Message: I don't care

By the end of Ronald Reagan's first term as president, supporters and opponents alike had begun to use the term "Reaganism" to refer to his governing ideology. As we approach a similar point in George Bush's presidency, no one uses the word "Bushism" to mean any coherent set of political beliefs, or even a recognizable presidential style. Instead, a "Bushism" has come to mean the incumbent's funny way of talking.

Everyone can identify the components of a typical Bushism. The staccato sentences with no pronouns. The long, meandering non-sentences that reverse course or get lost completely halfway through. The fractured syntax. The weird mixed metaphors and non sequiturs. But no one has yet explained convincingly why he talks this way or what it means. My colleagues at THE NEW REPUBLIC have put together a collection of some classic Bushisms, to be published in May by Workman Press. Reading these classics all at once does not solve the mystery, but it does shed some light.

The last president so widely mocked for his way of talking was Eisenhower. The most famous Eisenhowerism was not even uttered by Eisenhower himself. It is an Eisenhowerized version of the Gettysburg Address, composed by a reporter named Oliver Jenson: "I haven't checked these figures, but eighty-seven years ago, I think it was, a number of individuals organized a governmental setup here in this country, I believe it covered certain eastern areas, with this idea they were following up, based on a sort of national independence arrangement ...," and so on.

Bush's rambly, semi-coherent style has been compared to Ike's. But actually, even this parody is reasonably coherent compared to some of Bush's riffs. And Eisenhower's verbiage lacked Bush's essential frantic quality ("frantic" being, oddly, one of Bush's favorite criticisms of others). Eisenhower's admirers believe he could turn the fog machine on or off at will, and used it purposely to divert and confuse. No one has ever tried to make that case about Bush, so far.

The positive spin on Bushism is different. It's that his inarticulateness illustrates his sincerity and lack of artifice. It shows he's a regular guy, a small-"d" democrat, uncomfortable with fancy-pants rhetoric. Bush himself advanced this theory in what was, as it happens, the most eloquent performance he's ever given: his acceptance speech at the 1988 Republican convention. Naturally he didn't write it himself (any more than Lincoln, these days, would dream of writing the Gettysburg Address). The author was Peggy Noonan, Official Purveyor of Soaring Lyricism to Republican Presidents.

In one of that speech's most absurd flights of Noonanism, Bush read from his teleprompter: "Now I may be—may not be the most eloquent, but I learned that early on the eloquence won't draw oil from the ground. And I may sometimes be a little awkward, but there's nothing self-conscious in my love of country. And I'm a quiet man, but I hear the quiet people others don't...."

In fact, no one has ever accused Bush of being a "quiet man." In fact, he's a babbler. And in fact, some of his silliest and most patently insincere babbling comes when he is trying to be demotic. ("When I need a little free advice about Saddam Hussein, I turn to country music." Or, "Look, I want to give the high-five symbol to high-tech.") The best case for Bushspeak as an expression of the democratic impulse is slightly different. It was made by Jacob Weisberg of TNR, who compared Bush to "a big, clumsy golden retriever, drooling and knocking over furniture in his eagerness" to please everyone.

The canniest description of Bush's strange discursiveness belongs to Timothy Noah of *The Wall Street Journal*, who compares it to call-waiting: Bush is always putting one half-finished thought on hold to take up the next one. Closely related to this is the intensely self-conscious tendency described by Meg Greenfield in *Newsweek*: "Bush is always telling you how to look at what he is doing, or what the impression is he is trying to create." ("We have—I have—want to be positioned in that I could not possibly support David Duke, because of the racism and because of the bigotry and all of this.") What these tics share is a clear view of the mind at work. Bush's mental processes lie close to the surface.

This is honesty of a sort. Bush is famous for his attitude that politics is apart from one's true self—a distasteful business one stoops to when one has to. When he denies a remark he has just made ("People understand that Congress bears a greater responsibility for this—but I'm not trying to assign blame") or reads his stage directions aloud ("Message: I care"), he is telegraphing, perhaps involuntarily, that he doesn't really mean what he says, that it's all just politics. It's sort of a verbal wink. The implication is that as long as we're all in on the joke, it doesn't matter. ("I've told you I don't live and die by the polls. Thus I will refrain from pointing out that we're not doing too bad in those polls.")

But maybe it does matter. What Bush seems to have no interest in is not just politics in the narrowest sense but political ideas of any kind. He is constantly revealing this in unconsciously dismissive references to "freedom and democracy and things of that nature" or "values that—that have made this country the greatest, freedom, democracy, choices to do things—you know." When he says, "I think in politics there are certain moral values. I'm one who—we believe strongly in pluralism ..., but when you get into some questions there are some moral overtones. Murder, that kind of thing ...," he is pretty transparently faking it. The transparency is to his credit, in a way, but the faking it is not.

Bush's problem is not a lack of intelligence—or (as some have suggested) an excess of the prescription tranquilizer Halcion. At bottom, his problem is a simple lack of anything to say. That's why he babbles. That's why he contradicts himself. That's why he tells you how you should perceive what he's saying, instead of just saying it. That's why he tells transparent whoppers.

A man anchored in true beliefs of some sort not only would be more articulate in expressing those beliefs. He would make a better liar, too. He wouldn't wreck a story about how faith sustained him while he waited to be rescued from the Pacific during World War II by adding, preposterously, that he was also sustained by thoughts of "the separation of church and state." Ronald Reagan, a man of a few, clear, rock-hard beliefs, was a brilliant liar.

If there were a real Bushism, in other words, there might not be all those Bushisms. Is that clear at all?

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 27, 1992

SQUARE ONE

The Bush administration has not yet explained why this country needs to remain a military superpower—indeed, why it needs a strong defense at all. Its recently leaked Defense Planning Guidance, prepared by the Pentagon, offers little beyond the banal observation that the world remains a dangerous place and the odd-looking clutch of scenarios that have been taken apart by its critics. One—that the United States would send an expeditionary force to free Lithuania from a renewed Russian threat, all in the context of a general European war—seems preposterous. The intellectual conservatism that was a hallmark of the administration's national security policy before the Gulf crisis doesn't appear to have given way to anything more than a grudging acceptance of the end of the cold war.

Some of the criticism, however, was unfair. The scenarios in the Guidance are not the basis of war plans (those are put together in *real* secrecy), but a sketch of possibilities in order to shape decisions about how many tanks, airplanes, and transport ships to buy. The critics have responded mainly by coming up with their own scenarios, which are, not surprisingly, less demanding than the Pentagon's. Both the Pentagon and the critics miss the point. The very notion of planning-by-scenario is the rustiest cold war relic there is.

For the last forty-five years the United States knew who its main adversary was, and (by and large) where it was most likely to fight it. It was safe to name the Soviet Union "the Threat," as the field manuals called it. Politicians and bureaucrats became used to an elaborate, ponderous, and regular planning system based on scenarios handed down from the secretary of defense. It made sense to operate this way in a period of large budgets and slight changes in the defense budget; it makes less sense at a time of small budgets and deep cuts.

What's wrong with scenario planning? It is vulnerable, first of all, to publicity. The sharpest analyses of potential war zones will stir up a political fuss overseas and hence be suppressed. Imagine that in early 1989 a plan had provided for war with Iraq: the White House would have hushed it up; Congress would have expressed disbelief. Today politically safer war plans, geared to traditional foes, are just as prone to criticism at home. In the near future, scenarios will likely stick to the few safe enemies left (North Korea is a perennial). But if the events of 1990-91 are any guide, even North Koreas can metamorphose in a matter of months.

In the future U.S. armed forces will face a less predictable and more demanding world than traditional scenario-planning can grapple with. We believe, for example, that the United States should remain a hefty military power in Northeast Asia, where competition between a reunited Korea, China, and Japan could turn nasty if not damped down by an American presence. It's hard to put that strategic concept into a war plan, and impossible to do so politely in *The Washington Post*. The idea that the United States should strive for supremacy in space—including the development of anti-satellite weapons and vigorous pursuit of SDI technologies—is similarly hard to link to a war we can plan for today. But such a position could do more for peace in space and on earth than British naval power did for the oceans in the nineteenth century. These purposes of military power need to be the bases for military planning, even if they are not as concrete as mid-twentieth-century scenarios.

Regional war plans also tether our military capacity. We are nearing a time in which rapidly changing technology, the diffusion of weapons of mass destruction, and the flux of international politics make the kind of war waged a year ago in the Gulf increasingly unlikely. Instead of sending vast ground forces to liberate an occupied country, we may wish to batter an opponent from afar, or to excise nuclear arsenals in the hands of a threatening dictator. In this less predictable world, scenario-based troops may not be a flexible enough weapon.

There are two options for a new kind of defense strategy: basing the size of one's forces in comparison with the next-larger powers' (even if they're not opponents), and thinking strategically in terms of competitive position and purposes. The former was the resort of states in the years between the two world wars. The latter is more suitable today in a world where our major rivals are liberal democracies. We need to ask what kinds of power—nuclear, space-based, naval, aerial—we can discard or scale back, as well as those we need to maintain or expand. Some scenario-based plans would continue to be necessary, but they should be the consequence of defense strategy, not its foundation. In the disorderly new world, Americans must understand defense as an insurance policy against a sea of troubles, not as a set of vaccines against specific maladies. •

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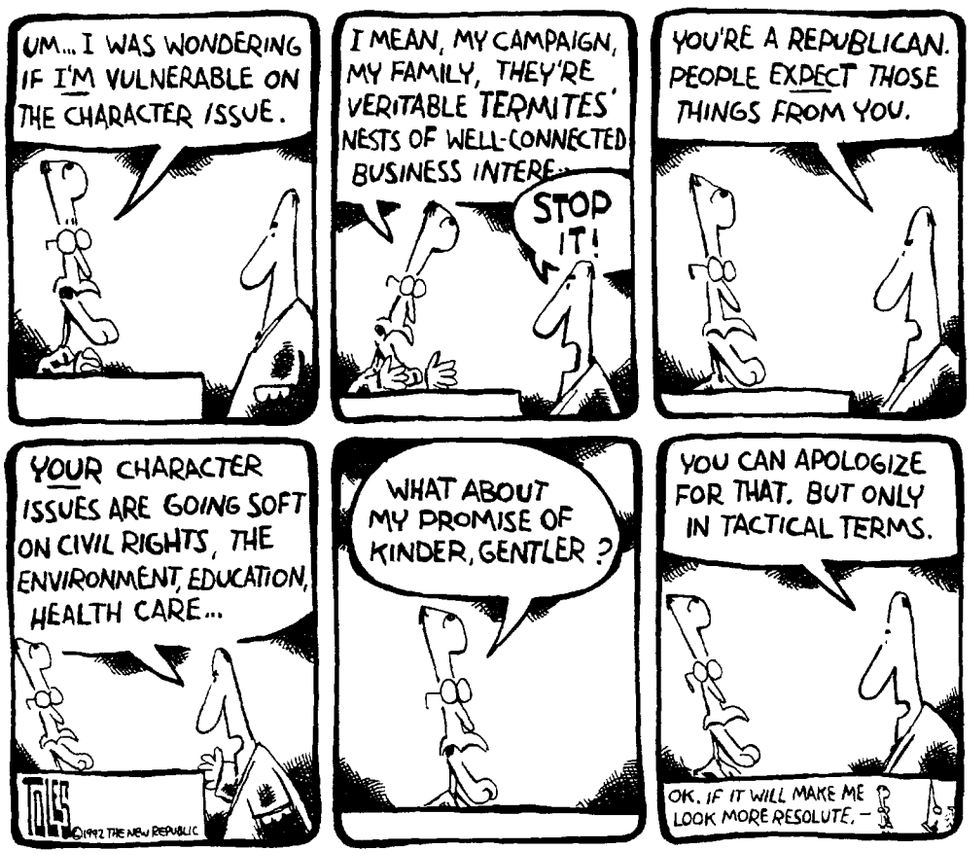
NOTEBOOK

BUSHISM OF THE WEEK: "I will say that I think it is enough, and that it's what we ought to do right now—and fight like heck for what we believe in, here. And I think it is." —April 1, at a news conference, responding to questions about whether his policy toward Russia was belated

BROWNED OFF: The major result of the New York primary is that Jerry Brown was decisively defeated. If there were ever an environment in which Brown's vacuous radicalism might have caught on, it seemed to be New York City. But even with the ringing endorsement of *The Village Voice* and a strong lead among MTV viewers, Brown was humiliated by a candidate who didn't even officially run. Paul Tsongas's triumph—and it is difficult to call it anything less—was, we think, not simply an expression of voter disgruntlement at the alternatives, but a blow to the system that really *is* in crisis: a federal government that operates at crippling levels of debt and is seemingly unable to grapple with its own irresponsibility. Whatever the fate of the Tsongas candidacy, we hope this message is carried by whoever wins the nomination in the fall.


UM... I WAS WONDERING IF I'M VULNERABLE ON THE CHARACTER ISSUE.
I MEAN, MY CAMPAIGN, MY FAMILY, THEY'RE VERITABLE TERMITES' NESTS OF WELL-CONNECTED BUSINESS INTERE...
STOP IT!
YOU'RE A REPUBLICAN. PEOPLE EXPECT THOSE THINGS FROM YOU.
YOUR CHARACTER ISSUES ARE GOING SOFT ON CIVIL RIGHTS, THE ENVIRONMENT, EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE...
TOLES ©1992 THE NEW REPUBLIC
WHAT ABOUT MY PROMISE OF KINDER, GENTLER?
YOU CAN APOLOGIZE FOR THAT. BUT ONLY IN TACTICAL TERMS.
OK. IF IT WILL MAKE ME LOOK MORE RESOLUTE, –

THE OTHER RACE: We're not used to saying kind words about Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, but his recent remarks on the subject of race relations are both courageous and important. Speaking at his alma mater, Yale University, Kerry drew a picture of an America that is crippled by its inability to speak frankly about race. He argued that the civil rights agenda had become fixed on the "inherently limited and divisive program—affirmative action," while ignoring the broader context of collapsing family structure, crime, and welfare dependency that enmeshes far too many black Americans. He drew a link between the liberal affirmative action obsession and the lack of a broader consensus to finance a major rescue effort in the inner cities. He urged the establishment of programs within the inner city that stress responsibility from entitlement-receivers. Kerry has not bitten the bullet yet: a rejection of affirmative action and a workfare program that is tough enough to work. But he has moved the debate within the Democratic Party one more notch toward realism on the subject of race and avoided the more egregious—and politically cost-free—varieties of moral uplift. We hope Bill Clinton will even more forcefully follow his lead.

COUP IN PERU: At five a.m. on Sunday, April 5, fifteen men armed with submachine guns jumped over the wall surrounding Gustavo Gorriti's house in Lima and took him, his computer, and his written notes from his house at gunpoint to army headquarters. Gorriti, 42, an expert on Peru's Shining Path guerrillas and the best journalist in the country, writes for many Peruvian and American magazines, including TNR. Many political leaders were put under house arrest in Alberto Fujimori's self-imposed coup, but only a few people—perhaps three or four—were taken away, as Gorriti was. The reason, according to Tina Rosenberg, a friend of Gorriti's who also has written about Peru for TNR, is that Fujimori's chief adviser, Vladimiro Montesinos, has been Gorriti's sworn enemy since 1984, when Gorriti wrote an article in Peru's leading newsmagazine, *Caretas*, presenting evidence that Montesinos worked as a lawyer for drug traffickers and that while in the army sold military

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secrets abroad. Since returning from exile, Montesinos has become Fujimori's top adviser and the leading advocate for the coup. Gorriti's captors first considered charging him with leading a "campaign to tear down Peru's image" outside the country. But pressure from Spanish and U.S. authorities to free him convinced them to change the charge to possession of secret documents. He was released on Tuesday, but his computer has not yet been returned and he cannot leave Peru. The coup was bloodless but will have bloody consequences. The Shining Path guerrillas, who now control many of Lima's slums, have been hoping for such an event for years; the greater the repression and the less democratic space in which they can organize, the more Peruvians turn to the Shining Path. The human rights monitors and other independent political voices, who have been the principal victims of the guerrillas in the past, now face increased government repression. And the security forces, which have been notoriously unable to distinguish between the Shining Path and the political left, are now free to do what they please.

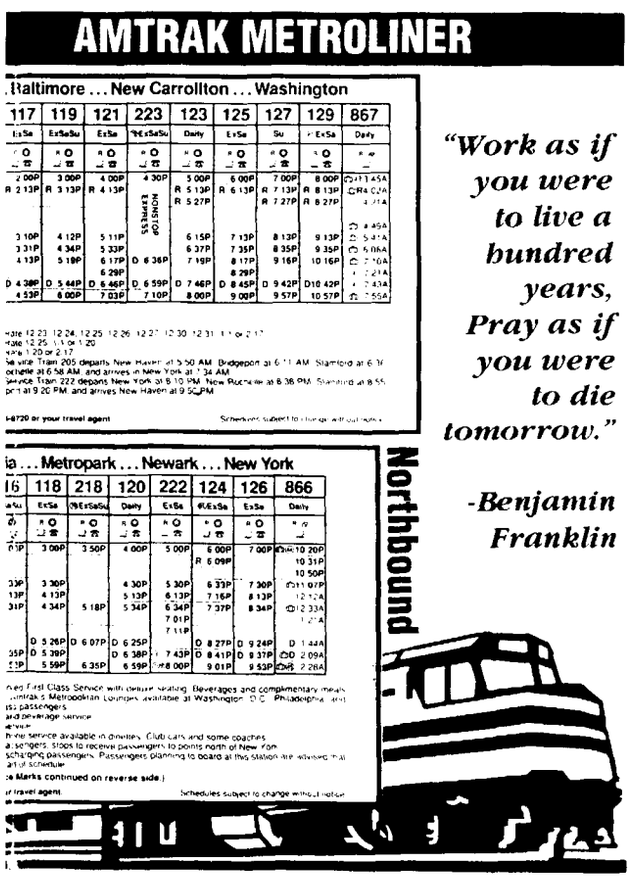
L IBRARY OF TINY BOOKS:

Human Rights in China

Information Office of the State Council of
The People's Republic of China

T RADE TUSSLE: Prospects for passing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) this election year look increasingly bleak. Trade relations between the United States and Canada are more acrimonious than ever, thanks to a Census Bureau ruling that bars Canadian-made Hondas from entering the United States duty-free and a Commerce Department finding that would place a 15 percent duty on Canadian lumber. Both rulings were prompted by pressure from American manufacturers and violate the principle that each country have free access to the other's markets. Meanwhile, some administration officials recently told *The Washington Post* that they might want to delay final approval of the free-trade agreement until after the election. It's a shame that Mexican President Carlos Salinas and Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who have staked their careers on prompt approval of NAFTA in the face of demagogic domestic opposition, must be held hostage by election-year politics in the United States.

B OUND FOR GLORY:


AMTRAK METROLINER
Baltimore ... New Carrollton ... Washington
117 119 121 223 123 125 127 129 867
Ex Sa Ex Sa Su Ex Sa Su Daily Ex Sa Su Ex Sa Daily
Metropark ... Newark ... New York
16 118 218 120 222 124 126 866
Ex Sa Ex Sa Su Daily Ex Sa Ex Sa Daily
Northbound
"Work as if you were to live a hundred years, Pray as if you were to die tomorrow."
-Benjamin Franklin

(The current Amtrak Metroliner schedule)

D EPARTMENTS: Among the latest products from TNR writers: reporter-researcher Matthew Rees's *From the Deck to the Sea: Blacks and the Republican Party*, a searching study of the Republican civil rights debate and the history of black involvement in the Republican Party (Longwood Academy Press); and our regular contributor Jonathan Rauch's reliably idiosyncratic travelogue about Japan, *The Outnation* (Harvard Business School Press). Those many readers who have written to urge us to include more of Douglas G. McGrath's "Shrub Files" in our pages will find the latest missive from Agent Duke on page 10. He will be leaking regularly for us, we hope, for the indefinite future. •

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Agent Duke returns.

THE SHRUB FILE

By Douglas G. McGrath

Sunday, March 1, 1992—Washington

A disturbing incident with the Shrub. Around 2 a.m. he came out of the living quarters. He was wearing his Skull and Bones pajamas and a baseball cap that said, "Team CIA." He had a little milk mustache. He walked past the detail, without looking at us. He just said, "90, 90, 90 . . . " Agent Diggins said he might be speaking in code and looked up "90" in the book. It means there's an unidentified school bus on the president's route; take alternate route 2.

I followed him outside. He was at the horseshoe pit, sitting in the sand, his back to me, rocking and muttering the number "90." I wanted to touch his shoulder to let him know that I was present, but the guide says we're allowed to touch the president only under limited circumstances. (Rule 37: a) to push him out of the way of harm; and b) to remove unsightly food particles from the face area.)

"Mr. President?" I said. "Is everything all right?"

"90, 90. I used to be at 90 percent approval. Only 10 percent more and I would have had three-digit approval. Now the public is stiffing me. Giving me a rebuff. Doesn't matter how I Ramboed the Rapist of Kuwait or about that whole wealth of other performance out there. Put it this way: economy's in a free fall. Was at 90, now 40! Polls say people think I'm fickle. What about the people answering the polls? Let's eyeball that 90/40 group. Who looks flighty in that setup?"

Agent Banks helped me take him back to personal quarters. We took him to the bedroom. Mrs. Shrub had fallen asleep in bed eating some ribs. The Shrub still seemed agitated, so we gave him another Halcion.

Monday, March 2

Bad day for the Shrub. No new Clinton scandal for almost sixteen hours.

Friday, March 6

At the morning campaign meeting, commercials for the fall were discussed. Mr. Black said, "What we need, Mr. President, is to find an issue on which you have not reversed your position."

That brought the meeting to a halt. Mr. Scowcroft had time to fall asleep, woke up, and fell asleep again.

Finally, Mr. Teeter said, "Maybe we're being unrealistic here. What about finding an issue on which you've only changed your position once?" Everyone looked hopeful, but it wasn't until he said, "twice?" that anyone had anything.

The meeting was interrupted by Crisco, who came over from State. He said he had been busy working up a story about Israel selling weapons to China, when a fax came from Yeltsin begging for help. There is rioting, panic in the military, and talk of revolution. Yeltsin said hunger is so severe that over 35 percent of the country now eats their mail for lunch. There was talk of something else about missiles, but Crisco couldn't read that part of the fax. Crisco and the Shrub immediately drafted a plan to issue an emergency invitation for Russia to attend the annual NATO dance.

"Do we need to fire anyone for Buchanan?" the Shrub asked. When he was told no, he said, "OK, we've got thirty minutes. Who wants to play eighteen holes?"

Thursday, March 12

The Shrub got some good news. Jerry Brown accused Governor Clinton of having sex as a graduate student. Clinton said he had never done it in the continental United States: he had done it only once or twice, in international waters, and had not matriculated.

Tuesday, March 17

President Nixon denounced the Shrub's efforts to help Russia. He said that if the economy doesn't improve quickly, Yeltsin may lose his job to dangerous right-wing fanatics. The Shrub laughed bitterly. "Just like me!" he said. Suddenly he felt sorry for Yeltsin and decided to have the Japanese send a check for $27 billion.

Friday, March 27

The Shrub went for his physical today. It lasted four hours and was conducted by Dr. Lee. Dr. Lee asked Mrs. Shrub if she had noticed any signs of the Shrub being under stress. I thought of the other night but kept quiet. Mrs. Shrub said, "In his sleep, he keeps saying, 'Smell the glove.'" Dr. Lee told the Shrub he needed to relax.

At the White House, the Shrub met with Crisco. Crisco was very sympathetic about the checkup and offered to take over the Shrub's job if that would relieve any stress.

Sunday, March 29

This was the day the Shrub tried to relax. Agents Diggins, Banks, and I agreed it was a complete failure. Agent Diggins said it was worse than the time President Nixon tried to have a sense of humor.

After church the Shrub decided to walk home—*through Lafayette Park.* Naturally, the press went crazy, and some guy from Reuters, a photographer, fell over and was trampled. The Shrub bent over to lift him up and threw out his back.

Monday, March 30

The park trampling made all the evening broadcasts. Over and over, they played the clip of the photographer hitting the ground. Now, I thought for sure this was going to look bad for the Shrub, but I guess that's why he's in politics and I'm in protection. When people saw that reporter fall over, they figured the Shrub had pushed him and his approval jumped 20 percent.

For the first time in weeks, the Shrub looked relaxed.

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a playwright and screenwriter.

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The defense budget wars.

THE ASPIN PAPERS

By Morton Kondracke

From C. Wright Mills through Oliver Stone, it's been gospel on the far left that the military-industrial complex runs America and that the U.S. economy can't function without huge defense budgets. The claim is hogwash, of course. Historically, every time the United States finished fighting a war, it cut its military to a shadow force, then had to scramble to rearm for the next conflict. Now that the cold war is over, the cutting is under way again. Washington currently is debating how much to cut, how fast, and by what means. The questions are, who's got the most sensible framework for making cuts and for designing post-cold war forces, and who deserves to lead the way in planning the future of U.S. military policy?

Basically, four contenders are involved. The Bush administration is recommending a 4 percent annual reduction in the nation's $270 billion military budget over five years, or $55 billion less than previously projected. Representative Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and leader of a national Democratic establishment consensus (including Bill Clinton), would double that cut, for a savings of $110 billion over five years. Senator Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, is taking a middle position between Bush and Aspin. And various liberals in and out of Congress, including Jerry Brown, think the budget ought to be cut by as much as 15 percent each year, providing a "peace dividend" of up to $450 billion over five years. Five years from now, the administration wants to be spending $250 billion on defense instead of $270 billion. Aspin would spend $230, Brown $150 billion.

For this year the Pentagon is confident that it will prevail with its proposal to cut $7.6 billion from current levels as opposed to $15 billion recommended by Aspin and other Democratic leaders. The reason is partly that Nunn is resistant to bigger immediate cuts, partly that members of Congress with military bases and defense industries in their districts are reluctant to cut deeper in a recession, and partly that the Democratic leadership in Congress is unable to assemble a majority for rewriting the 1990 budget agreement, which prevents use of defense savings for domestic spending.

But winning this year's budget fight doesn't mean that the administration will win intellectually or politically in the long run. According to Joseph Fromm, director of the Washington office of the London-based Institute for Strategic Studies, "For the first time in decades, a congressman [Aspin] is out-thinking the Pentagon on strategy, and I predict that within three years the administration will be using Aspin's analysis to prevent Congress from going wild in cutting the budget."

A Ph.D. in economics and a former Pentagon whiz kid under Robert McNamara, Aspin is relying on a concept called "threat-based analysis" to plan future U.S. forces, whereas the administration argues that uncertainty and a requirement to "shape the strategic environment" dictate slower reductions. Aspin's arguments sound rational and concrete, as befits a former systems analyst, but may be overly mechanical. The administration's rationales, vague though they sound, may be more compelling.

Through an extensive set of studies launched late last year, Aspin has tried to figure out where the United States should be prepared to fight during the coming decades and how to design forces able to do so. Aspin assigns each potential enemy an "Iraq equivalent," based on the force that Saddam Hussein had prior to the Gulf war. (Saddam now rates 0.4; Iran, 0.2; Syria, 0.6; and China, 1.4). Aspin favors a U.S. force able to fight one "Desert Storm equivalent" war—requiring 500,000 U.S. troops—probably in the Persian Gulf, while keeping another 500,000-man force available for rotation in case of a long standoff. To do this, Aspin calls for nine active Army divisions (versus sixteen in the current force and twelve favored by the Pentagon), 290 Navy ships (instead of 528 today and 450 recommended by the Pentagon), 75,000 troops stationed in Europe (down from 320,000 in 1989, 240,000 now, 150,000 favored by the administration, and zero by Brown), and 1.4 million people in uniform (as against 2.1 million in 1990 and 1.6 million planned by the Pentagon).

Aspin charges that Secretary of State Dick Cheney and General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, came up with their alternative defense plan—the 1991 "base force" recommendations—by mere "subtraction" from existing forces and without rethinking strategy now that the Soviet Union has collapsed. Cheney and Powell flatly deny this. They and subordinates such as Paul Wolfowitz, the undersecretary of defense for policy, contend that Cheney launched an elaborate strategic review inside the Pentagon in late 1989, just after the Berlin Wall fell, which resulted in a high-level decision in May 1990—revealed to the public in a speech by President Bush on August 2, 1990—that U.S. forces could be cut by 25 percent and should be retargeted against various "regional" threats rather than a surprise strike from the Soviet Union. Bush's "new strategy" speech at Aspen, Colorado, was overshadowed by another event the same day: the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Aspin also says (and many outside analysts support him) that though the Pentagon adapted to the 1989-90 collapse of the Warsaw Pact, it failed to undertake yet another full-scale strategic review after the failure of the

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Soviet coup in August 1991 and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union and its armed forces. Cheney, Powell & Co. deny this too, claiming that in 1990 they foresaw the end of the Soviet threat. There is little on the record to support them.

In spring 1990, just as Cheney aides say he was secretly contemplating a 25 percent cut in the Pentagon budget, Cheney was publicly challenging assertions by Aspin and then CIA director William Webster that the Soviet Union was incapable of becoming a renewed military threat to Europe. Bush said in his August 2 speech that the best he could anticipate was a reduction of Soviet forces to 2 to 3 million men and that, "for all the positive changes we have seen, the Soviet Union remains a world-class military power." In fact, the Russian army is now 1.5 million men, lacks cohesion, and would have to cross 400 miles of hostile Ukraine to get to Central Europe.

If Cheney were contemplating large-scale reductions early on, it would have been politically advantageous to have gone public with them. But a key Cheney motivation, say those who watch him closely, is control—especially in any conflict involving Congress and Democrats, whose motives he distrusts. He wants to build down U.S. forces at a moderate pace, and he does not want Congress forcing him to go faster. Powell, meanwhile, is a commander who witnessed the demoralization of his troops in Vietnam and does not want to preside over the "breaking" of the first-rate force that the United States rebuilt in the 1980s and that fought so successfully in the Gulf. He is convinced that cuts of the size Aspin has recommended can only mean faster discharge of career servicemen—already being reduced at the rate of 110,000 per year—and diminished training budgets, which will get soldiers killed if they have to go back into combat.

Sound though their case may be, however, Cheney and Powell have not developed a convincing way to sell their program. In his National Military Strategy report this year, Powell said that "the real threat we now face is the threat of the unknown, the uncertain. The threat is instability and being unprepared to handle a crisis or war that no one predicted or expected." Another administration rationale, as stated by Wolfowitz and Cheney, is the need to "shape the future strategic environment." "Strong U.S. forces keep potential adversaries from becoming real adversaries," one Cheney aide said. "Our presence in Western Europe is reassuring to the Eastern Europeans. Our presence in the Pacific is reassuring to Japan and the other Asians. If we pull out, who knows what nervousness will result?"

The administration criticizes Aspin's threat assessments as "static"—"Who knows how big the Iranian army will be five years from now?" one Cheney aide said—but lately it has produced what amounts to a rival analysis, in a secret memo that puts forward a set of scenarios. It argues that the United States should be prepared to fight in the Gulf, defend Korea with ground troops as well as airplanes, resist a Russian invasion of the Baltics, and mount smaller actions in the Philippines or Panama. That planning document met with guffaws from Democrats, who regard it as unlikely that the United States would go to war to defend Lithuania. Pentagon aides say the idea is to deter an attack in the first place.

Pentagon planners also came in for criticism when *The New York Times* got hold of another secret document portraying the administration as wanting to be the world's lone superpower and policeman. Actually, the administration simply wants to reassure Germany and Japan that their security will be protected so that they do not have to become nuclear powers.

In the clash between Aspin and the administration, the administration will prevail this year because Nunn, uncharacteristically late in producing his own strategic analysis, is siding with Bush. He contends that with a million military and civilian employees of the Defense Department due to be let go over a five-year period, plus a million defense industry workers, and with 87,000 troops coming out of Europe this year, it would be a logistical nightmare to cut faster than Bush is doing in the short run. However, Nunn agrees with Aspin that 150,000 U.S. troops aren't needed in Europe over the long haul and that the budget can be cut over five years by about $85 billion. Nunn is promising a third kind of strategic review in coming months that will include a rewriting of the roles and missions of the U.S. armed forces, including possibly eliminating separate air arms for the Army and Marine Corps.

The bottom line is that the United States is going to grope its way down from the 6.3 percent of GNP spent on defense in 1985 to around 4.5 percent this year and 3.4 percent in 1997. If threats from Iran, Iraq, and Russia do not materialize, chances are the percentage will go even lower. Good news for everyone, except Oliver Stone. •

Clinton and the interest groups.

BASIC INSTINCT

By Fred Barnes

NEW YORK

True to form, Bill Clinton sought to please in the run-up to the New York and Wisconsin primaries on April 7. Encouraged by a voter in Milwaukee to give his "talented" wife, Hillary, a Cabinet post in a Clinton administration, he wouldn't say no. "I certainly want her involved in some very clear and high-level way," he said. Addressing the Jewish Community Relations Council in New York, Clinton argued the Bush administration's Israel-bashing has made "overt anti-Semitism" more acceptable. "That is very, very dangerous at any time," he

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Getting Serious About Learning

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

When we talk about the poor performance of our students, there are always plenty of explanations. Public schools are rigid and bureaucratic; the curriculum is impoverished; students have no incentive to work hard; teachers have so many other responsibilities that they hardly have the time or energy to do their real job—in other words, it's everybody's fault but the students'. People seldom talk about the attitudes and habits of mind kids bring to school. What responsibility do students—and their parents—have for school performance? Usually I avoid asking this question; it sounds too much like passing the buck. But recently, a couple of things have brought it forcibly home to me.

A few weeks ago, Harold Stevenson, co-author of *The Learning Gap* (New York: Summit Books, 1992), a book comparing education in Asia and the U.S. that I've already discussed in this column, talked to the AFT Executive Council. We asked him about the reasons for the differences in achievement between our kids and the Asian students he had studied, and he talked about the structure of the school day and the way teachers conduct lessons. But he also had a lot to say about the attitudes of students and their parents toward school and learning.

Are our students learning, at home, that education is worth having—and worth working hard to get?

Stevenson studied school children in Minneapolis; metropolitan Chicago; Sendai, Japan; Taipei, Taiwan; and Beijing for over 10 years. Asian students performed far better than American students on all tests Stevenson and his colleagues administered. Nevertheless, the American parents who were interviewed expressed much greater satisfaction with the quality of the education their children were getting than their Asian counterparts. Eighty percent of American mothers thought their children's schools were good or excellent in comparison, for instance, with 40 percent of Taiwanese mothers. And our kids were more satisfied with themselves and their performance than the Asian kids with theirs.

What can we make out of this? For one thing, Asian parents and children have higher—or different—standards from ours. Some of Stevenson's other findings bear this out. Whereas Asian mothers say that the most important thing for their school-age children is to study hard and do well in school, American mothers say that school achievement is just one among a number of things: Kids should also be popular, good in sports and have other skills. Of course the youngsters reflect this attitude. When kids in Beijing and metropolitan Chicago were asked what was most important to them, nearly 70 percent of the Chinese kids said *education*. Only 10 percent of our kids mentioned education; they valued *money* and *things*.

Stevenson and his colleagues also found that Americans didn't have much faith in the efficacy of working hard in school. When Asian mothers were asked when they could predict their children's performance on college entrance exams, they replied, by 11th or 12th grade. American mothers responded, at the end of elementary school. In other words, Americans believed that ability, not work, was what counted. When Asian students were asked the most important factor in math performance, 70 percent of the Japanese and 60 percent of the Taiwanese said studying hard. Only a little over 20 percent of American students mentioned work; and 55 percent attributed success to having a good teacher.

Some of the same points are made by Nathan Caplan, Marcella Choy and John Whitmore in "Indochinese Refugee Families and Academic Achievement" (*Scientific American*, February 1992). The children whom Caplan, Choy and Whitmore studied were from poor Vietnamese and Laotian families who came to this country in the 1980s. They had "lost months, even years, of formal schooling while living in relocation camps....[and] they suffered disruption and trauma as they escaped from Southeast Asia." The students arrived with little or no English and went to schools in poor, inner-city areas. Nevertheless, 27 percent had an A average and over 50 percent a B average, and their grades in math were even higher. This was not because of lax standards: Half of them scored in the top 25 percent on standardized math tests.

Are Asian kids just smarter than American kids? Of course not. Caplan, Choy and Whitmore find, like Stevenson, that these kids and their parents believe effort to be more important than ability—and the kids make the effort. After supper, "the table is cleared, and homework begins." Older children help the younger ones and "seem to learn as much from teaching as from being taught." The arrangement makes learning a part of family life, so youngsters are comfortable with it. This comfort carries over to school and makes the kids more likely to perform well.

The article discusses other factors that contribute to the success of these children. But both it and Stevenson suggest that we are neglecting something important in our efforts to reform American education.

We talk a lot about accountability for teachers and administrators and school boards. But what about the students? Are they learning at home that education is worth having—and worth working hard to get? Are they learning that achievement is mostly a result of the work *they* put in? Or are they being told that they are not really responsible for their success or failure?

In all other industrialized countries, where students achieve at much higher levels than our kids, students are held accountable for their learning. We can fiddle all we like with ways of making the adults in our schools accountable, but we will not raise student achievement levels to where they need to be unless parents and students take the job of learning seriously and kids come to school ready to be accountable, too.

MR. SHANKER'S COMMENTS APPEAR IN THIS AD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. READER CORRESPONDENCE IS INVITED. ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO MR. SHANKER AT THE AFT, 555 NEW JERSEY AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20001. ©1991 BY ALBERT SHANKER.

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added. And in an election eve debate with Jerry Brown, he acceded to Brown's ridiculous and demagogic claim that New York's problems were caused entirely by the Bush and Reagan administrations in Washington.

Clinton pandered. But there's something else he didn't do: he declined to make specific promises to special-interest groups in the Democratic coalition. Or at least he didn't make many, and hasn't throughout the campaign. He didn't guarantee a Cabinet post for his wife, a promise certain to thrill feminists. (My guess is she'd have no formal job at all in a Clinton administration.) He didn't vow to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as Walter Mondale and Gary Hart did in 1984. He didn't promise to funnel zillions to New York in emergency urban aid.

Frankly, I hadn't expected to find a distinction in Clinton's case between pandering and promising. I'd figured Paul Tsongas was correct when he called Clinton a "pander bear" willing to "say anything and do anything to get elected." But it turns out that although Clinton is eager to curry favor with practically everyone, there's a limit. He's been careful not to compromise himself by endorsing the agenda of every Democratic interest group, most of them liberal. Why so standoffish? Clinton recognized the fatal mistake so many Democratic presidential nominees have made. They catered to liberal groups in the spring, then suffered in the fall for having embraced so many specific liberal positions. This happened to both Mondale (he endorsed organized labor's agenda) and Michael Dukakis (he adopted the anti-defense positions of peace groups). They pandered *and* promised, and paid dearly for it. Clinton merely panders.

On gay rights, for example, Clinton describes himself as an enthusiastic supporter. In fact, he's made two promises unlikely to help in the fall if he's the nominee. He says he'd end the Pentagon's rule against gays and lesbians in the military. And he'd ban discrimination against gays and lesbians in federal hiring and contracting. But in answering a questionnaire from the Human Rights Campaign Fund, Clinton refused to back legislation that treats bias against gays and lesbians in the same blanket unconstitutional fashion as discrimination against blacks and women. Clinton favors a religious exclusion (Tsongas and Brown don't). Religious organizations that believe homosexuality is a sin would be allowed to bar hiring of gays and lesbians. It's this exclusion that makes all the difference. Without it, gay rights would be ruinous in the South and maybe elsewhere.

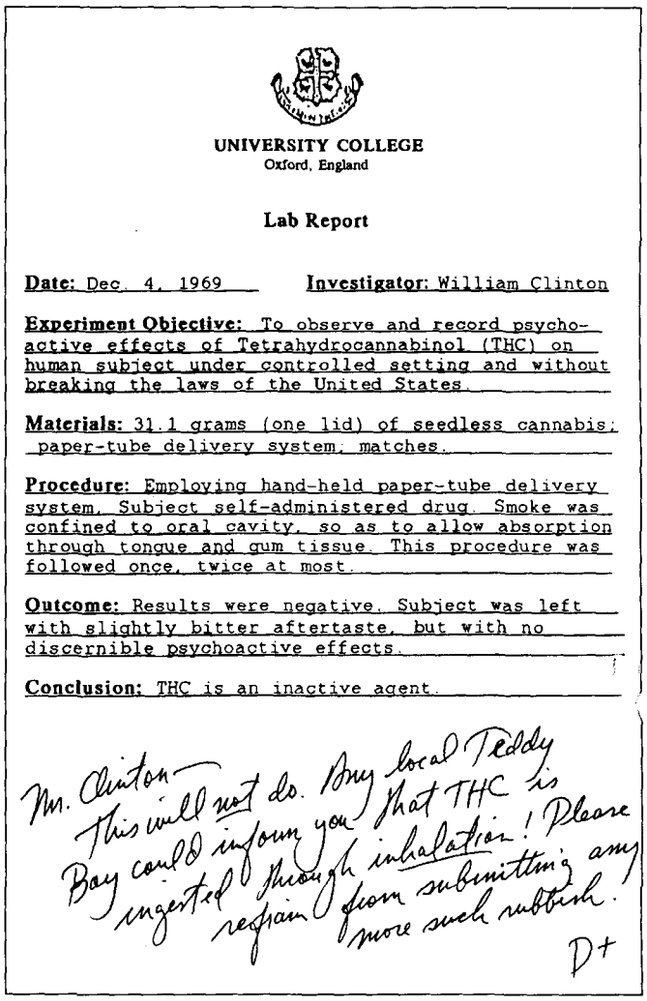
BILL'S BOGUS EXPERIMENT

By Garry Trudeau

Governor Bill Clinton's recent acknowledgment of youthful experimentation with marijuana is a strong reminder of just how many public figures were once bitten by the research bug. In providing an ameliorating jurisdictional context (England), Clinton recalls the pioneering offshore studies done by yachtsman William F. Buckley Jr., whose published results provided assurances that all experiments had been fastidiously carried out in international waters. In other respects, though, Clinton's experiments with marijuana were sadly conventional. Indeed, they share a characteristic that is all too common in the early bench work of most sitting politicians—the experiments were a total, abject failure.

If Clinton is to be judged harshly, it should be not for sharing his generation's passion for verification, but rather for the shoddiness of his efforts. Bill Clinton was nobody's fool, and yet his written lab report (reprinted here) reveals an appalling lack of methodological sophistication. Granted, nothing in his background prepared him for the elegance of the work being done at Oxford in the early '70s, but if Clinton is to make any claim to generational authenticity, he must first persuade his peers that he now grasps the fundamentals of their most cherished tribal rites.

GARRY TRUDEAU is the creator of *Doonesbury*.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Oxford, England

Lab Report

Date: Dec. 4, 1969 **Investigator:** William Clinton

Experiment Objective: To observe and record psychoactive effects of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) on human subject under controlled setting and without breaking the laws of the United States.

Materials: 31.1 grams (one lid) of seedless cannabis; paper-tube delivery system; matches.

Procedure: Employing hand-held paper-tube delivery system, Subject self-administered drug. Smoke was confined to oral cavity, so as to allow absorption through tongue and gum tissue. This procedure was followed once, twice at most.

Outcome: Results were negative. Subject was left with slightly bitter aftertaste, but with no discernible psychoactive effects.

Conclusion: THC is an inactive agent.

Mr. Clinton—
This will not do. Any local Teddy Boy could inform you that THC is ingested through inhalation! Please refrain from submitting any more such rubbish.
D+

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Clinton backs a ban on the hiring of strikebreakers, but that's about as far as he's gone in promises to organized labor. The result: few union endorsements. Many labor officials are cool to Clinton. His reputation among unionists has been tarred by a report on his Arkansas labor record by Bill Becker, the state's AFL-CIO chief. When he canceled a speech in late March to a meeting of fifteen building and construction unions, the announcement of his no-show was applauded. Clinton can live with this. He'll get labor's support against Bush, and he won't be stuck with the image, one Mondale could never shake, of being in labor's pocket.

Clinton is the darling of three unions: the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. He got AFT and NEA backing largely because of his education record in Arkansas. He raised teacher pay. Besides, he's become friends with AFT president Al Shanker, though they've often disagreed. And he's for school choice, but only the sort that allows kids to choose among public schools, not private. However, Clinton says that as president he won't object if local communities include private schools as an option in a choice program.

Officials of AFSCME say he's gotten the endorsement of their big locals without making promises. When he, Bob Kerrey, and Tom Harkin appeared before AFSCME's board last January, Clinton "promised less than the other candidates," says Rick Scott, the union's political director. AFSCME favors national health insurance; Clinton said he wasn't for it. The union opposes the free trade agreement with Mexico; Clinton said he's for it. A black AFSCME staffer asked Clinton's position on the death penalty. Without hesitating, Clinton said he favors it. Clinton defended his plan for cutting 3 percent out of federal administrative costs every year. He didn't promise not to cut federal jobs, just to consult workers in any reforms. If they didn't trust him, Clinton said, "ask your officials in Arkansas." Officials there like Clinton because he involved them in government reorganization and assured them job cuts would be made only through attrition.

Clinton has passed up other opportunities for egregious promising. Last January he and other presidential candidates appeared before the U.S. Conference of Mayors. They were pressed to endorse the Sarbanes-Sasser bill that would funnel $35 billion to cities in emergency aid. "I just don't want to commit to the Sasser-Sarbanes proposal until I know that we have a way to pay for it and the money is going to be there," he said. The mayors back the bill, and Clinton's answer caused "some concern," said J. Thomas Cochran, executive director of the Conference of Mayors. In March Clinton's economics adviser Rob Shapiro was approached by a group of Keynesian economists who want $50 billion spent now to give the economy a demand-side jolt. Shapiro didn't even bother to discuss the matter with Clinton. He said no to a Clinton endorsement. The economists' proposal later got media attention, but Clinton didn't second-guess Shapiro's decision.

In New York Clinton abandoned his posture as an innovative Southern governor who wants to reinvent government. Having lost to Brown in Connecticut on March 17, he decided winning New York was imperative. He went limp on his issues and concentrated on attacking Brown's flat-tax proposal. Rather than challenge Brown from the right, Clinton outflanked him on the left, at least on the economic issue. It worked. And Clinton managed this without making unnecessary promises. In a televised debate, Joe Klein of *New York* magazine asked Clinton about his plan for letting students pay off college loans by working at reduced pay as police, teachers, and librarians. Municipal unions strongly oppose this idea. "I think they are wrong about that," Clinton said. "If kids want to pay back their college service and work when there are no union employees there, I think they should be able to do so."

Clinton's strategy isn't novel in theory, only in practice. Democratic presidential candidates normally run one campaign in the primaries, another in the general election. The first is liberal, the second far less so. The rub comes when Republicans pummel them in the fall with the liberal promises they made in the spring. Clinton has escaped this. It's not that he's made no promises at all—Tsongas got steamed at Clinton's promise to build two more Sea Wolf nuclear submarines. It's that he hasn't touched all the liberal bases in the usual Democratic fashion. The Sea Wolf promise actually works in Clinton's favor. The more Bush raises it, the stronger Clinton seems on military matters. Pretty clever. •

Clinton in New York.

THE SURVIVOR

By Sidney Blumenthal

The day after his victories in Illinois and Michigan, Bill Clinton returned home to Little Rock desperate to relax. He wanted to put all the exhausting cares of the campaign behind him, even if for just one day. His top aides, relieved by the results in the latest primaries and bone-weary, slept late, got haircuts, and read novels. Clinton went golfing. He went as a guest to the Little Rock Country Club, the finest in town, always open to the governor, yet still, almost four decades after the racial turmoil at Central High School, segregated. Clinton, of course, has had a strong record on civil rights. It is one of his motives for entering politics. He had hosted a dinner at the Mansion, in the room where Governor Orval

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Faubus plotted resistance to integration, for the nine blacks who had been denied entrance at Central High—and then taken them to the Little Rock Country Club. But in playing his nine holes on his single day off he was making a round of his residual parochialism.

The consequence was immediate and devastating. His campaign had thought of the Connecticut primary as a minor event on what would be, after Illinois, a national victory tour. Inside, on the endless daily conference calls of the strategists, there was talk of beginning the campaign against George Bush. Publicly, the prohibitive front-runner faced the inevitable questions about his running mate. In short, Clinton was communicating virtually no message; and in this vacuum the Country Club incident overwhelmed. With Paul Tsongas having suspended his campaign, Jerry Brown swept up his votes, especially among black voters, and by one point won Connecticut. "If we had won Connecticut by one point instead of losing it by one point," lamented one of Clinton's senior aides, "it's a different world." Now the campaign awoke in Gotham. The day before Connecticut, Clinton had been comfortably ahead; the day after, he lagged Brown by two points in the polls.

The dominant sense of New York today is elegiac, a feeling of loss of grandeur, centrality, and civility. Clinton and Brown battled borough to borough amid the ruins of Roosevelt, the collapse of the great liberal coalition. The New York Democracy, the oldest part of the national party, the source of its founding, had always been a cacophony of the marginal, drawn together by a superb coalition-builder, someone who stood outside and above the interest and ethnic groups, who was not so indebted or defined by any one of them that his compromises were seen as narrow. Franklin Roosevelt compromised everyone but himself as a leader.

Now the whole has dissolved into fragments. Any expression that is more than the outcry of fractionalized identity is suspect. The long-term effect of frustrated progress is that marginalization is no longer viewed as a condition to be overcome; rather the preservation of separation is regarded as the purpose of politics. In the absence of an overarching coalition, there is nothing but single constituencies. In the zero-sum game of dwindling fiscal resources, politics has become a battle of one against all. The recession, which began in New York's financial markets and remains deeply embedded, only serves to accelerate the centrifugal forces. The rules of the game are these: No one is answerable to anyone; anyone who seeks to rise above the din must be dragged down; any disciplining Rooseveltian impulse must be rejected. Any broader appeal waters down the narrow identity, fundamentally threatening it. And this self-defeating temper grotesquely masks itself as self-satisfaction: the old pride in New York as a tough, smart place where outlanders must prove that they are up to its exacting standards.

For a brief moment, ahead in the polls, Jerry Brown stood at the forefront of the New York Democracy: the anti-politician leading an anti-coalition. The man without an identity became the tribune of identity politics. He appeared in the guise of the ideologue, but with ever changing positions. Though he was constantly shifting, he cast pragmatism as corruption. He therefore had the advantage of the ideologue without the liabilities. His undifferentiated rage against "the system," which could not be reformed or governed, radically simplified his message.

Brown was ideally suited for this crusade. Neither people nor objects matter very much to him. The saving grace of the traditional hollow politician is that he is restrained by his rootedness in place and his web of ties to interests. Brown is the loner as universal man. If he doesn't have himself, what does he have, except his pointless, endless quest to prove to himself that he is and is not the son of the great California politician Edmund G. Brown Sr.? Brown seems fascinated and troubled by his inability to connect. By the time he mounted the soapbox in Union Square, he had evolved a natural appeal to desperation. His narcissistic curiosity flowed outward with incredible energy that gleefully expressed itself as sheer pessimism.

Behind the anti-Rooseveltian assembled a bizarre anti-politics coalition, from the Teamsters to Carly Simon. Brown's campaign began with the ritual pilgrimage to Albany, where the man who sits in FDR's tall chair emerged to pass a benediction of sorts over the candidate. "The presumption of Clinton's inevitability is now clearly rebuttable," proclaimed Mario Cuomo, mixing the jesuitical and prosecutorial. Brown and Cuomo could not be more different figures. Cuomo's sense of his own identity is overwhelming, even oppressive; yet in Brown he may have seen a wisp of the white smoke that might waft out of the chimney of the Democratic convention, blocked and brokered, a college of cardinals selecting the governor of New York. *Habemus Cuomo.* But what did endorsing Brown have to do with the tradition Cuomo represented? Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan held a press conference the day after the Cuomo-Brown appearance to attack Brown's regressive flat tax as a "silver bullet through the heart of Social Security." In other words, Brown's proposal would destroy the last legacy of the New Deal. When asked about this, Cuomo grudgingly confessed his opposition to the flat tax. For the rest of the week Cuomo acted out the acceptance of his thwarted ambition, giving almost daily tortured interviews on the subject of how he will never be president.

Brown was off and running, in part on the scenario scripted by Patrick Caddell, the political auteur. Brown's Caddell phase meant that he must assume the identity of Senator Smith, a fictional candidate that Caddell has been developing into a political hologram since 1983. The history of the man who never existed, Senator Smith, is an essential aspect of the recent history of the Democrats. Smith's geneal-

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ogy is a refraction of the failure of Jimmy Carter, whom Caddell polled for and advised, and ran through the campaigns of Gary Hart in 1984 and Joe Biden in 1987. In a book proposal written in 1988, Caddell described the voter "out there" in the "National Reality" as "more 'atomized,' isolated, and unable to affect a collective critical mass." Brown became the populist hero for the critical mass. Caddell himself charged to Gotham, saying he was "Shane," the gunslinger come out of retirement.

Behind the scenes, Jesse Jackson, anxious about being a non-candidate for the first time since 1984, and even more anxious that Clinton was putting together the multiracial Rainbow Coalition that Jackson never constructed, began to maneuver. He lobbied labor leaders to back Brown, and some responded to his pressure. Jackson could not help himself from being drawn magnetically to the limelight. Perhaps he too had a dream of the brokered convention turning to the man in the wings.

The left in New York, which has mostly raised identity politics to a principle, was suddenly galvanized to support an unlikely champion. With the ending of the cold war, this rump is in as profound a crisis of direction as the right, thrown back on a fantasy politics of symbols. And the old sense of universal hope has disappeared along with coherence. Being on the left now seems mostly a matter of sensibility, clinging to feelings of embattlement and disenchantment. Losing is the indispensable precursor to blaming. To this, Brown added the illusion of insurgency against "the system," the rhetoric of grass roots without roots. Much of his attraction lay in his lack of respectability: the career politician as guerrilla manqué.

More generally, Brown became the repository for the reaction against Clinton, who appeared in New York as a caricature of the tobacco-stained Southern courthouse pol: a liar, womanizer, racist. He was also seen as a bad political player, lacking in big-city savvy, a rube. Clinton replayed the crisis of his early campaign in a different key. His sins were egregious but venial. His wriggling about never having "broke[n] U.S. law" in smoking pot and then admitting that he had smoked it in England but never inhaled was the most ludicrous. (Many of his old friends believe that Clinton, wracked by allergies and unable to puff on a cigarette, told the truth. This may be so, but his statement was even more foolish in volunteering the unbelievable truth.) The cumulative effect of his obfuscations was that he appeared more like Wet Willie than Slick Willie. Every time he spoke, he raised the level of suspicion. His honeyed tone made him sound like a hypocrite to the New York ear.

Clinton's major strategic error was to misunderstand Brown as simply another Tsongas. The flat tax became the way to flail at Brown as if he were the "pro-business" do-gooder. But Brown was not a man with a plan. If the plan he has doesn't serve him, he gets a new one. Plans are disposable for the nullity; any position will do. While Clinton's attacks on the flat tax hurt Brown, partially blunting his movement, they also reduced Clinton's rhetoric to the anemic and skeletal. His identity

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shrank even further down to the stereotype. It was not until the very end of the primary that Clinton started to get Brown's measure, posing real change against Brown's nihilism.

But even as Clinton was reliving his nightmares in strange new ways—from Hillary's quotes in *Vanity Fair* on Bush's extramarital affairs to a new wrinkle in the draft story—Brown re-created the whole sweep of his career, from the startling rise to the enormous hope to the screwup. A week before the election, Brown was doing so well that he was running even among Jewish voters. But suddenly he yanked Jesse Jackson onto the stage with him, presenting him as his vice president. "What if you die?" asked a questioner at the Jewish Community Relations Council, attended by much of the Jewish leadership. Brown didn't answer. He was stunned by the hostility to Jackson. By playing the secondary role to Brown, Jackson diminished himself, and seemed genuinely shocked by the reaction. As quickly as he emerged, Jackson retreated behind the curtain.

JERRY BROWN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

But Clinton was rescued by more than Brown's mistakes. Once again his level temperament kept him moving ahead, undeterred in traversing the deadly no-man's land of the campaign. Slowly, he was assimilating as a New Yorker. It wasn't just that he explained that "bubba" meant "mensch." It was that his wretched experience paralleled what New Yorkers go through every day. Getting screamed at, having his speeches disrupted, being humiliated, hassled, and humbled was helping him and them to understand each other. When he shouted down an ACT-UP activist who tried to shout him down, New Yorkers began to sympathize. Getting tough with Phil Donahue added to the impression. The tabloids' daily mugging of Clinton had the perverse effect of making him familiar.

The most critical media event of the New York primary was Clinton's appearance on the radio talk show of Don Imus, the deejay. Clinton joked about "inhaling"—"I like to play the saxophone because you don't inhale"—and then the next day calling back to croon a few bars of Elvis songs for Imus. Why is Don Imus different from the Staten Island ferry, which Clinton worked on his first day in the city? The ferry is a cliché; Imus isn't. By going on Imus, Clinton was willing to risk another humiliation. "I'm mugging back," Clinton told him.

The most critical substantive event for Clinton was his foreign policy address—a set piece—which had the effect of jerking heads up with the thought that this is not a gong show but a contest for the presidency. Bush's response on Russian aid, scheduled at exactly the same time as Clinton's speech assailing Bush's reactiveness, immediately raised Clinton's presidential profile. In the meantime, Brown, on his single-minded, screeching track, had virtually nothing to say on foreign policy. Clinton, in the end, was serious; Brown, really, was not.

The tainting of Clinton and the unacceptability of Brown now stirred the vanity of the candidate who had just removed himself from the fray. Paul Tsongas, who believed he had been defeated because he ran out of money, actively encouraged efforts on his behalf. *Newsday* endorsed him; and Cuomo said pleasant words about his non-candidacy. Tsongas's gesture of running by not running, however, had a subtext. His campaign debt is close to $500,000; he has about $14,000 on hand. In New York he raised cash in a flurry of wishful thinking, without having to subject himself to the campaign. Fiscal responsibility finally framed more than his message.

On election day, despite the terrors, Clinton won New York—and Wisconsin and Kansas. The much predicted death by a thousand cuts didn't quite result in his demise. But it has resulted in cuts. Clinton has overcome Cuomo and Jackson, Brown, and Tsongas, but he is ensnared now in his own ambiguities. His unslick sliding has greatly overshadowed his empathy; his calculated answers are obscuring his intelligence; his evasions have cast a fog over his commitment. His techni-

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Jerry's Kids

On a pleasant Saturday afternoon you will not typically find me in the Upper West Side's Verdi Square (a.k.a. "Needle Park") observing a man wrapped in a Navajo blanket alternately blowing into a giant conch shell and chanting "Save the Whales, Save the Earth, Save America." This, however, is no typical Saturday. It is three days before the New York presidential primary, and I have come to attend a rally for Jerry Brown.

My first political rally was back in 1968 when I was taken to one for Spiro Agnew in my hometown in Virginia. Being surrounded by several thousand hysterical rednecks rhythmically shouting, "Dump the Hump!" (a reference to the Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey) was a boyhood trauma that drove me into the arms of the Democrats more or less for good. But Jerry Brown's rallies are different. What distinguishes them from the ruck of political rallies is the quality and diversity of the amusements provided. Where else can you get Carly Simon, Allen Ginsberg, Professor Irwin Corey, the Ramones, and sundry Teamster officials all on the same bill? And the entertainment had better be good, for, owing to the Brown campaign's exuberantly spontaneous scheduling, the candidate himself can be a long time coming. It is a bit reminiscent of a Sly and the Family Stone concert.

I was sorry to have missed an earlier Brown rally downtown in Washington Square. Friends of mine who attended said it was really cool—so cool they scarcely minded that Brown was almost two hours late. In the meantime, I was told, Allen Ginsberg recited a poem that resembled a "Harper's Index," Carly Simon sang (a cappella) the aptly chosen song "Anticipation," and the actor Matthew Modine assured the crowd that "the world is fucked up, but Brown will fix it!"

So my expectations were high as I approached Verdi Square that Saturday. About 5,000 people had assembled—students, graying Woodstock types, et al. The first few musical acts were not, I must say, very encouraging. A local folksinger led a sing-along with the refrain, "Change is coming down." A band called the Headcleaners sang, "I see a rich man pushing for a tax cut / I see a poor man sleeping on a grate." The crowd warmed to this, and several people around me began jumping up and down with fists raised in the air, shouting, "This is my country!" Next came a Marky Mark imitator who performed a rap number admonishing potential Clinton voters, "Don't be silly / He's just a Slick Willy." Who auditioned these acts, I wondered, Jon Pareles?

At length Professor Irwin Corey arrived on stage. "It is no longer immoral to be called a son of a bitch," he began. "I'd rather be called that than a son of a Bush!" After making some feeble jests at the expense of Neil Bush and other wayward children of the president, Corey concluded: "The Burning Bush says, 'Read my branches and kiss my ass.'" I could not help thinking that this pathetic old comedian has seen better days.

"We've just had a sighting of Jerry Brown," announced one of the event's organizers presently. "He's at Zabars, and he'll be passing around whatever he buys there when he finally arrives. But next we have Roger Moore! Roger Moore! Roger Moore!" Alas, the fellow who then took over the microphone bore little resemblance to the handsome actor who played James Bond. In fact it was Michael Moore, the director and star of the documentary *Roger and Me*. "That's OK," he deadpanned, "I get that all the time." Moore then introduced Don Conroe of the One Hand Clapping Band, who intoned, "We the People offer you peace. We the people offer you love. We hear your needs, we feel your feelings. All wisdom flows from a higher source. We salute that source in Jerry Brown." Accompanied by his daughter Ya-el, Conroe then blew on a conch shell, banged a gong, and led the crowd in a sort of rap version of "Give Peace a Chance."

"We've just had another sighting of Jerry," the now slightly restless crowd was told. "He's at the Cafe Lalo, getting an almond croissant. Meanwhile say hello to one of the great rock bands of today, Sid Straw!" (Who?) Someone near me was passing out an issue of the *Nation* with a cover story about Brown. I was so bored I began reading the book reviews. This tided me through the guitar solo of an Alice Cooper-like ensemble called Atom Bomb and an impassioned rant delivered by Bella Abzug in her usual armor-piercing voice, to the long-awaited appearance of Carly Simon. But to my dismay, Carly did not sing "Anticipation," or even "You're So Vain." Instead, accompanied by someone called Jon Hall, she launched into an unmemorable eco-ditty with the defiant refrain, "Take all your atomic poison power away."

By now Jerry had arrived. *Enfin!* But did Carly introduce him? No, that office fell to the president of the Teamsters local, who was himself given the honor of an introduction by a lesser Teamsters official. Once Brown started to speak, however, further wool-gathering became impossible; for at that moment, an equally amplified counterspeech began issuing from an indeterminate source in one of the buildings around Verdi Square. It was none other than Lenora Fulani, the candidate of the dread New Alliance Party. Although making sense of both speakers at once was a painful cognitive task that overtaxed both lobes of my brain, I gathered that Fulani was unhappy with Brown's choice of Jesse Jackson as his running mate, while Brown was unhappy with Congress for "sitting around bouncing checks while people are dying."

Halfway into Brown's oration the ridiculous Fulani was silenced, and Jerry warmed up. Judging from the applause meter, he struck a chord when he declared his intention to forgive student loans if elected. After a few disobliging words about the "poobahs and mandarins" who oppose his insurgency, he scudded off to his next appearance. The stage was left to the ineffably grotesque Joey Ramone, who led his band in a rousing number titled "Censorshit." Sadly, no one seemed inclined to slam dance as Ramone wailed, "Oh Tipper, come on / Oh Tipper, come on."

JIM HOLT

Jim Holt is a New York writer.

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cally precise equivocations may come from the same place within as his technically precise policy prescriptions; but what is a virtue in the latter is a vice in the former. Part of his image of being a trimmer may also come from his earnestness. His desire to please, to be seen as worthy, prompts him constantly to explain himself. But it's not clear whose approval the fatherless man finally needs or wants, or when he feels he will have got it. He may think it's the voters, but you can't please all of the voters all of the time.

Having won in New York, he'll have plenty of time to reintroduce himself to the public. But neither confession nor toughing it out will further clarify his identity. Clinton must make the election larger than his flaws, larger even than his resilience. When the activist-scholar returned to Arkansas, it was not only to lift up his state and himself but also to create a base camp for a resurgent Democratic Party. New York laid bare the centrifugal disintegration that has beset the party of Roosevelt. The argument between Brown and Clinton was an argument about destruction and redemption for this coalition. Only by making that larger purpose clear in the months leading to the New York convention can Clinton now redeem himself. •

A submarine Chernobyl.

UNDERWATERGATE

By Gabriel Schoenfeld

Every day brings news of accidents and near-accidents stemming from the unsafe use of nuclear power in the former USSR. The most stunning recent disclosure exposes a major nuclear submarine accident that took place in August 1985, nine months before Chernobyl, which the Soviet press did not report until more than six years after it occurred and the Western press has not reported at all.

Now that news of the accident has surfaced, the West must face two worrisome facts. In the realm of Soviet military disasters, there has been less glasnost than is commonly assumed. Other serious nuclear mishaps may yet be revealed. More important, the lax safety procedures that caused the accident suggest that Russia's ability to manage the hazards bound up in the atom is worse than we had known. The United States has already allocated $400 million to help Russia dispose of its nuclear bombs. Western countries including the United States are also being asked to step in with capital and technical advisers to help fix decrepit nuclear power plants and avert a second Chernobyl. But equal or greater dangers stem from obsolete nuclear-powered ships and submarines. The Russians are pleading—unsuccessfully thus far—for help from the United States in dismantling these vessels because they lack the resources to make even routine repairs.

The latest accident to come to light occurred thirty miles north of Vladivostok on Chazhma Bay near the village of Shktovo, the site of a shipyard that served the USSR's Pacific Fleet. On August 10, 1985, technicians were changing the reactor core of a nuclear submarine, a maintenance procedure that must be carried out every five years, when they discovered a leak under the reactor's cover. The newspaper *Trud*, which broke the story of the accident last fall, described this as a flaw demanding immediate correction. Repair work required removal of the reactor cover, a procedure that would normally be carried out in dry dock to maintain vessel stability. Shktovo lacked dry dock facilities, but lax safety rules permitted the technicians to proceed. As they performed the delicate operation, waves may have caused the ship to roll, accidentally dislodging a lattice that regulated the reactor. "A reaction started," reported *Trud*. "Red-hot steam burst from the reactor's maw and forcefully struck the cover ... fire burst from the shattered submarine and brown smoke poured out." The fire burned for more than an hour and a half. It is not possible to corroborate independently the *Trud* account, although the official military newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, has confirmed key details of what *Trud* initially reported.

After the blaze was extinguished, the gates to the shipyard were closed and workers were compelled to shave off all hair, surrender their clothes, and take repeated showers punctuated by radiation checks. Lieutenant V. Mezin was a member of the special crew that arrived to evaluate the damage. He found the personnel in the shipyard were not properly trained to deal with radioactivity. "I was at the accident three hours after the explosion," he told *Trud*. "One of the yard's women dosimeter operators literally took samples from ships ... with her bare hands." The samples she provided caused dosimeters "to go off scale."

A parade of black Volga sedans carrying military officials arrived at the shipyard shortly after the accident to evaluate the damage. "Local residents say that never before in their lives had they seen that number of black Volgas at the same time." *Trud* alleges that an order was given to "mop up the accident by Monday," two days later, and not to list it as a nuclear mishap but as a "thermal explosion." As in the Chernobyl accident, the people in the adjacent settlements were not immediately informed of the danger or evacuated from their homes, and intercity telephone communications were disconnected, preventing word of the accident from spreading. Crude efforts were evidently made to protect the local population from radioactive dust. According to the director of a Young Pioneers Club, who was returning from a vacation on August 10, the road from the airport "was covered with polyethylene and there were polyethylene bags on the feet of the people there."

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The long-term health consequences of the accident remain uncertain. Captain V. Danilyan, head of the Pacific Fleet's chemical service, wrote in *Krasnaya Zvezda* that "in August 1985 there was a real danger of undermining the health of not one, but of hundreds of thousands of people." Because of the careful cleanup, "this threat was eliminated." He reports that "overall and oncologic morbidity" in the affected areas does not exceed similar measurements for the entire region. The significance of this information remains uncertain. Unless the dosage is substantial, it is rarely possible to link any particular case of illness to radiation exposure. Given the gross irregularities in the former USSR's system of gathering and reporting health data, evaluating the effects of radiation pollution on the health of the local population will remain difficult.

Whatever the health effects, the physical damage and radiation contamination caused by the explosion were substantial. The one-ton reactor cover was found more than 100 yards from the submarine. "Radioactive fuel had spilled into the water and sunk." Ten people were killed, their bodies, says *Trud*, "scattered throughout the bay's waters." A 180,000-square-meter site on a nearby mountain was enclosed with a wooden fence and used as a burial ground for the contaminated material. According to *Krasnaya Zvezda*, "Four trench-type burial grounds with an overall capacity of 5,650 meters were installed, and more than 100 meters of asphalt covering, 240 meters of contaminated porous clay filler, and 350 tons of building structures were removed and taken away for burial." Twenty-one miles of concrete and asphalt roads were also decontaminated, evidently by washing them, a task that *Krasnaya Zvezda* says was performed "with high quality."

The fragmentary remains of the ten workers who died were buried in "specially prepared pits, and the submarine was dragged to a shoal and left there" minus its reactor. Commissions composed primarily of military officers came to study the area in 1990 and 1991. Excerpts from their reports suggest that the cleanup remains incomplete: "Decontamination work in the sanitary-protection zone and at the ship repair yard industrial site not completed," says one notation reported by *Trud*. Another excerpt states that "it has been established that the cobalt-60 radionuclide is being carried from the center of the accident by sea water." Although the Russian press reporting does not provide adequate data for evaluating the extent of current radiation contamination at the site, the explosion ranks as perhaps the navy's worst nuclear accident in three decades, a period that included a considerable number of disasters in the Soviet nuclear fleet.

In the past six months we have already seen three incidents that alarmed, or should have alarmed, the world: a fire at one of the still-operating reactors at Chernobyl on October 11, 1991, that nearly resulted in a meltdown; a fire at the troubled Balakovo nuclear plant near the Volga River on March 4; and finally, the radioactive gas leak at the Sosnovy Bor nuclear power station near St. Petersburg on March 24. Each accident was apparently contained with no damage beyond plant grounds, but the pattern of breakdowns and mishaps, along with the revelation of the accident near Vladivostok, suggests that even more bad news is sure to come.

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SDI after the Soviets.

STARBURST

By David C. Morrison

Like gerbils tirelessly treading an exercise wheel, Washington officialdom is condemned to cover and recover the same policy ground. As the "Star Wars" debate drags on into its tenth year, Washington runs the risk of once again mindlessly recycling recent history.

In a 1967 speech Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara denounced as destabilizing plans for a "thick" nationwide missile defense called Nike-X. Then, oddly, he announced plans to build a scaled-down antiballistic missile network called Sentinel to defend against Chinese missile attack. Two years later President Nixon touted an even more limited Safeguard system to defend missile silos. At a cost of $8 billion, a 100-interceptor site was unveiled at North Dakota's Grand Forks Air Force Base in 1975—only to be shuttered a few months later. China, meanwhile, didn't field an intercontinental ballistic missile until 1979. Even today it has no more than a handful of them.

A quarter century after McNamara's speech, Washington is again forging a commitment to deploy a "thin" Sentinel-style ABM network, this time to fend off such chimerical dangers as maverick launches from the former Soviet Union and ICBM attacks by Third World rogues. Few participants in the Star Wars debate dispute the merits of perfecting "theater" defenses to swat down shorter-range missiles on overseas battlefields. But it is hard to make a compelling case for a highly expensive long-range defense system. At a time when the Pentagon is struggling to cram its many programs into an ever shrinking budget sack, the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization plans to plunge a whopping $72.6 billion between now and 2005 into something called Global Protection Against Limited Strikes (in the inevitable acronym, GPALS). After the Air Force's F-22 fighter, GPALS is the most costly—and unnecessary—megaproject

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remaining on the Pentagon books.

To understand the problem, it helps to recall the flavor-of-the-month fashion in which SDI has evolved. When President Reagan delivered his infamous 1983 Star Wars address $27 billion ago, the goal was to erect an "impenetrable shield" that could deflect a Soviet first strike of 5,000 warheads. In 1987 that mission impossible was abandoned in favor of "deterring" Soviet attack by striving to destroy in flight fewer than 2,000 warheads with ground-based rockets and 4,000 "Smart Rock" interceptors based in space. In 1990 Smart Rocks gave way to smaller, more autonomous "Brilliant Pebbles," some 4,600 of which were to swarm in orbit. Despite internal Pentagon estimates of $119 billion for acquisition, initial operations, and "applicable" expenses, Congress appropriated only $2.8 billion for SDI in 1990, out of $4.5 billion requested. With the Soviet Union foundering, Star Wars too seemed headed fast for extinction.

Then came the (arguable) prowess of the Patriot anti-missile missile as a Scud-buster in the war with Iraq. On the heels of this p.r. bonanza, President Bush launched GPALS, which further narrowed the anti-missile mission, aiming to knock out only 200 missiles fired from anywhere on the planet. Pushed by Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and its ranking Republican, John W. Warner of Virginia, Congress made its own bid approving the Missile Defense Act of 1991, which calls for the deployment by 1996 of a 100-missile ABM site, consistent with the 1972 ABM Treaty, "as the initial step" toward fielding a possible seven-site, nationwide limited defense system.

In plumping for a $5.4 billion SDI budget for next year—a 30 percent increase over the 1992 spending figure—the SDI Organization insists that the Missile Defense Act "constitutes the basis for a consensus between the administration and the Congress." Well, not necessarily, as will become clear in this year's SDI funding fight. "I'm not sure that's what Congress did last year," Senator William S. Cohen, a co-sponsor of the Missile Defense Act, protested to Defense Secretary Dick Cheney in late January. "We came up with an anti-missile defense system that goes beyond [the] ABM [Treaty] to a very limited degree. I'm not sure it should be classified as a GPALS system."

But SDI chief Henry F. (Hammerin' Hank) Cooper wants his GPALS, and he wants it now. In a draft SDI progress report circulating on Capitol Hill, Cooper proposes the Loring Air Force Base in Maine as the first anti-missile site rather than Grand Forks, as originally conceived. Starting out in one corner of the country instead of the center, of course, could be a nice way to fuel momentum to fill in the six other sites promptly. The Star Warriors also want to deep-six one of two proposed ground-based interceptors as well as a ground-based surveillance and tracking system. Doing so could only boost the fortunes of Brilliant Pebbles and another space-based GPALS segment, a constellation of fifty sensor satellites called Brilliant Eyes. Responding to charges that he is single-mindedly pursuing his own space-based agenda, Cooper has spoken of snipping $1.7 billion from Brilliant Pebbles' budgets over five years. Even so, spending on them would average more than $800 million a year, compared with the $466 million in 1992.

Struggling to preserve GPALS's space components is only one of the rearguard battles Cooper must wage this year. Aldric Saucier, a senior scientist with the Army's Strategic Defense Command who has been accorded protected "whistle-blower" status, is spreading horror stories about fraud and mismanagement within SDI, which he describes as a "high-risk, space-age national security pork barrel for contractors and top government managers." Meanwhile, David Pryor of Arkansas, chairman of the Senate governmental affairs subcommittee, has begun an investigation of the SDI Organization's overreliance on overpaid contractors. His is one of at least three Capitol Hill panels investigating SDI management practices.

Charges of Pentagon malfeasance aside, Cooper's unswerving devotion to Brilliant Pebbles raises several other worries. Brilliant Pebbles' starry-eyed fathers at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory have talked of unit costs ranging from $300,000 to $1 million. Skeptics will recall that the Air Force once promised to deliver the Advanced Medium-Range Air-to-Air Missile—with a far less arduous mission than Brilliant Pebbles, which must remain untended in space for up to ten years at a time—for $300,000 a shot. Today that missile goes for $720,000. Excessive complexity is an even weightier concern. "Each segment of GPALS ... is highly complex; integrating these segments would be one of the most technologically complex undertakings the nation has ever faced," the General Accounting Office reported in February. Congressional auditors fret most about the awesome task of writing and debugging the volumes of software needed to run battle management for a sprawling network of 1,050 missile and sensor satellites and widely dispersed ground sites. "The consequences of an operational software failure with GPALS could be catastrophic," the GAO concluded. "The Patriot missile defense system—whose supporting software is much smaller and far less complex—failed to engage an incoming missile during the Persian Gulf [war] resulting in the deaths of twenty-eight Americans. If GPALS fails to engage, millions of people could be killed."

An identical conceptual flaw afflicts both GPALS and Nunn's and Warner's ground-based system. In neither case do the posited threats justify the costs of deployment. One rationale is the possibility of errant missile launches from a decaying, turbulent former Soviet Union. But reiterating the testimony of legions of national security officials, CIA chief Robert M. Gates assured the Governmental Affairs Committee on January 15 that "the experts in our community do not believe that there is a concern about an unauthorized launch of any of the Soviet strategic systems or the tactical systems." Any failure of deterrence would occur in the old-fashioned way, at the very top, in which case GPALS's advertised abil-

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ity to block 200 warheads would prove cold comfort in the face of thousands of incoming Russian warheads.

On February 25 Gates also told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that only the former Soviet Union and China have missiles that can hit U.S. territory. (France and Britain do too, but never mind.) "We do not expect any other countries to develop the capability to threaten U.S. territory with air- or missile-delivered special weapons for at least another decade," Gates added. That view casts the 1996 Nunn-Warner deadline for a national defense system in a far less urgent light.

It also begs the question whether Third World nations will actually bother to field long-range missiles. Too many discussions of missile proliferation gloss over the profound engineering difficulties in devising ICBMs that could strike the United States from the Eastern Hemisphere. Stretching a medium-range missile and drastically cutting its payload to hit nearby Israel and Saudi Arabia, as Iraq did last year, is simple by comparison. Emerging powers may feel that they have compelling reasons to acquire shorter-range rockets to rattle in regional confrontations. (And against such low-flying weapons orbiting Brilliant Pebbles would be largely impotent.) Developing long-range missiles, however, entails courting bankruptcy by financing a space program. And even massive, long-term effort doesn't ensure success, as witnessed by the recent launch failure of a Chinese Long March rocket. When new nations do develop nuclear weapons, and some eventually will, they are not going to entrust a precious military asset to capricious long-range rockets. Smuggling a bomb across porous borders would both assure delivery and hamper efforts to identify and retaliate against the deliverer.

During Senate debate last July, Nunn declared: "I do not see how anyone could come to the conclusion that we do not need an insurance policy." But in formulating rational defense policy in an era of $400 billion budget deficits, no less than in insuring against the risks of daily life in an age of mounting premiums, we must weigh the real dangers that confront us. Thus far, at least, national and global missile defense schemes fail this simple test no less resoundingly than did McNamara's Sentinel a generation ago.

DAVID C. MORRISON is national security correspondent for *National Journal.*

The revival of American manufacturing.

HEAVY METAL

By James J. Cramer

After a decade of gloomy prognostication from economists, journalists, and politicians, it may come as a surprise that American industry now is equal to or better than most of its trading competitors. Our manufacturing companies dominate, not just in mundane fields such as chemicals, wood, paper, and metals, but also in areas such as aerospace, communications, computers, and semiconductors. Public opinion-makers, who earn their keep in the still reeling U.S. service sector, may fight this judgment. But as a stockpicker who bets on the fortunes of American companies, I can tell you that fears about an uncompetitive America exist more in print than in the marketplace. Put simply, the stock market is signaling a new era in American manufacturing might.

What happened to turn the ugly ducklings into swans? Obviously it helps that the nation is emerging from a recession that tore through manufacturing industries before decimating the service sector. Industrial stocks always do well coming out of an economic slowdown, since they move in jumps and jolts, as opposed to service stocks, which tend to grow incrementally year after year regardless of the economy. The slight uptick in the economy, however, only tells part of the story. The New Dominance, which is probably how *Newsweek* will describe the phenomenon, has its roots in two currently unpopular groups of people: economic policy-makers in the Reagan administration and America's industrial CEOs.

From the perspective of American industry, the Reagan period represented the beginning of a renaissance that saved whole sectors of the economy and rescued us from being relegated to nothing more than the world's largest soda dispenser. Throughout his administration, Reagan let American industry know that he would back any attempts by management to make their companies more competitive. But it was his brutal handling of the strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Orga-

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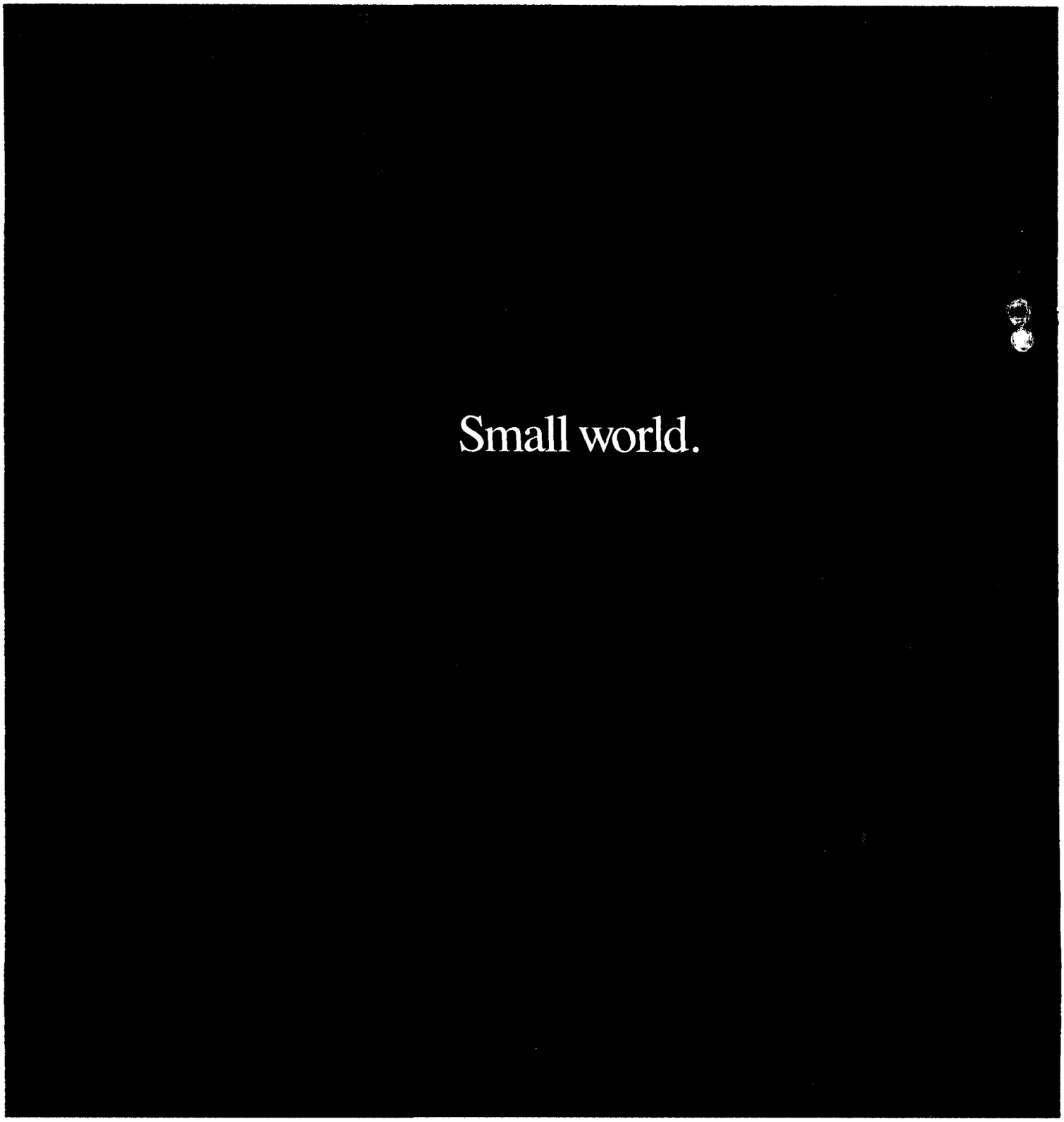

Small world.

Technology has changed the world and made neighbors of us all.

Some things don't change, though, including the need for a strong defense in a world where our most distant neighbors are only hours away.

The question, as always, is, How strong is strong enough?

Tomorrow's answer will have to account for new realities. One is that America's armed forces are coming home from overseas bases, yet the nation's global responsibilities remain great.

At Boeing, we're helping to build technologically advanced equipment that can give our armed services global reach without requiring continuous global presence.

This new equipment can be deployed rapidly to anywhere on earth; it costs less to support in

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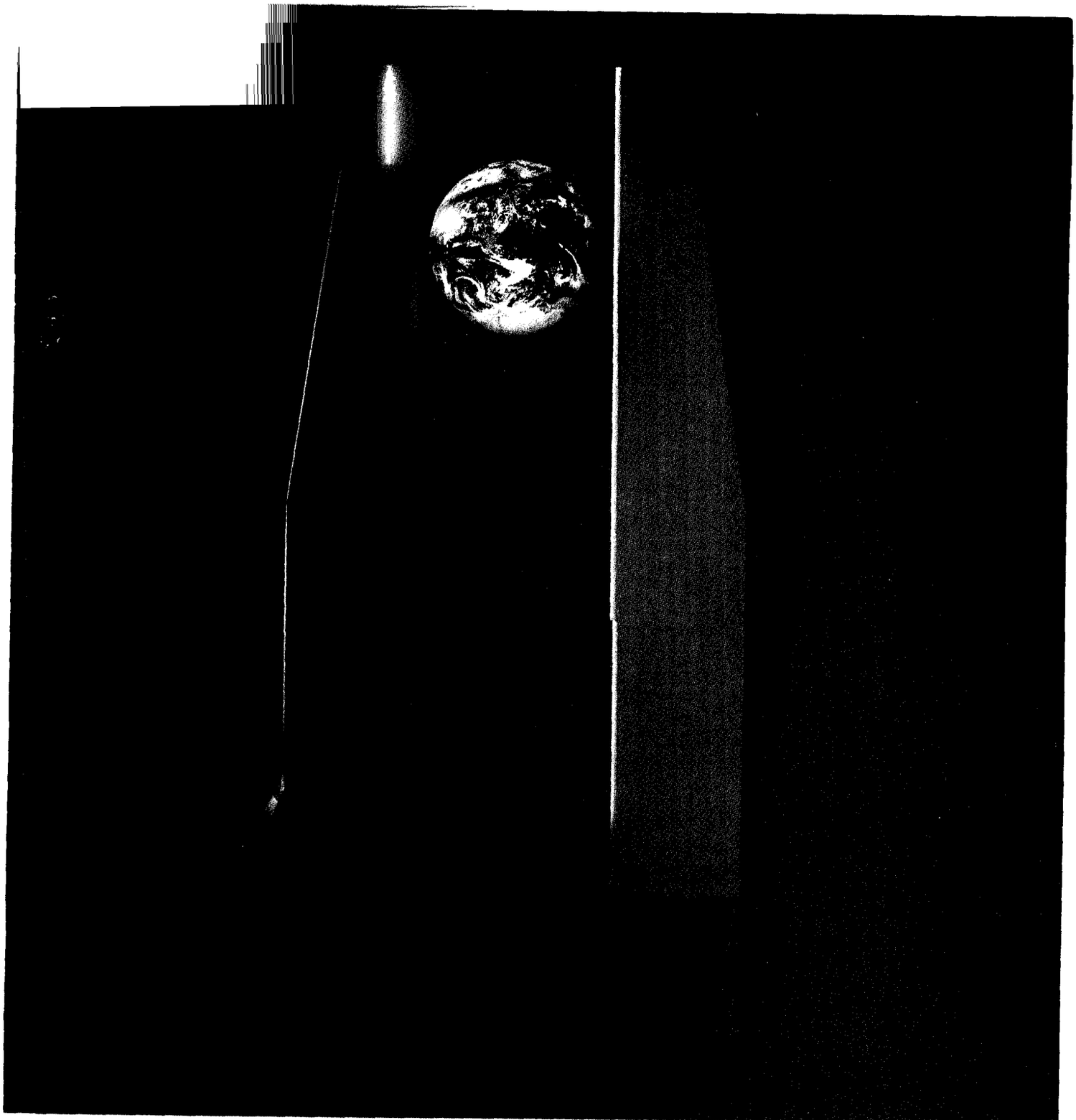

the field; it's more dependable, more reliable, and needs less manpower than older equipment.

Boeing has been a partner in America's defense for more than 70 years. We will remain committed to that partnership in the challenging, hope-filled years ahead.

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nization (PATCO) early in his first term that led to the wholesale shutdown of uncompetitive factories and the elimination of the less productive and highly paid layer of middle management from the American work force. Until Reagan fired the illegally striking air traffic controllers, American manufacturing meekly toyed with the idea of eliminating the white-collar ranks of middle management, which had exploded in size in the '60s and '70s. After Reagan took the initiative, American industry followed suit. The management of Bethlehem Steel, for instance, laid off thousands of white-collar employees (in addition to tens of thousands of blue-collar ones), saving the company in the process. And General Electric, after Jack Welch took over as CEO in 1981, imitated Japanese corporate style by reducing the company's payroll by 113,000 employees over the decade, with heavy emphasis on cuts in middle management. This trend has made itself felt throughout the entire American manufacturing sector.

The Reagan administration, at the insistence of Federal Reserve Board chairman Paul Volcker, also facilitated a major devaluation of the dollar. This was part of a concerted policy. In 1985, sensing the destructive impact a strong currency was having on U.S. industrial might, the White House devised a multiyear coordinated decline in the U.S. currency, a decline so steep that now only the most technologically advanced foreign countries with the lowest wages can compete with us. As treasury secretary, Jim Baker convinced the French and Germans to go along with the plan. The yen, for instance, dropped from 240 to the dollar in September 1985 to 129 to the dollar in January 1988, a level at which it has remained relatively stable ever since. This coordinated effort lasted long enough for U.S. companies to reorient themselves away from exclusively domestic markets and toward international ones.

There were always a handful of U.S. companies that bothered to think globally. Coca-Cola and Pepsi, for example, have so saturated our market that for years they have had to look overseas for almost all of their growth. Similarly, the giant drug companies do billions of dollars of business in Japan and Germany. Most industrial companies, however, had made little headway with exports until the Reagan-led intervention gave them a chance. American chemical and paper manufacturers took advantage of the weak dollar and reasserted themselves against hapless competitors based in countries with strong currencies. In other words, it became cheaper to buy U.S. pulp and paper in Sweden than it was to purchase these commodities from giant Scandinavian concerns. The same goes for Dupont's or Monsanto's customers in France, Germany, and England—all rich currency nations that buy raw fiber for clothes and furniture.

The only real short-term disadvantage of this strategy was that it devalued U.S. assets. Thus the gobbling of American real estate by the British and Japanese and the raiding of U.S. companies by overseas conglomerates. But given the imbalances we had experienced with many of our trading partners, these transfers represented a quick fix of the balance of payments. The result was that the U.S. trade deficit fell from $152 billion in 1987 to $66 billion last year, which is almost entirely accounted for by oil imports and Japanese autos and electronics. Meanwhile, the U.S. share of world manufactured exports went from 12.3 percent in 1985 to 12.7 percent in 1989. The engines fueling this revival are companies like GE, which increased its earnings per share from $1.82 in 1981 to $5.10 in 1991 after streamlining its management. By comparison, service-oriented Times-Mirror Corp.'s earnings per share rose only seven cents—from $1.10 to $1.17.

Of course, neither the symbolic breaking of the PATCO strike nor the dollar devaluation would have made much difference if much-maligned U.S. management hadn't followed the White House's lead. But hundreds of American companies took drastic measures in the '80s, from slashing payrolls to dropping products on which the profit margin is low and automating simple, formerly labor-intensive tasks.

Let's look at just two examples: semiconductors and consumer electronics. It is true that the Japanese have been terrific competitors in semiconductors, an industry that was once the sole domain of Silicon Valley, and that Toshiba and Hitachi now dominate. But the fastest-growing semiconductor manufacturer in the world for the past five years has been Intel, the Silicon Valley-based U.S. chip-maker. And it's the microprocessor that Intel devised and now manufactures that is the brains behind the personal computer, easily the most important technological innovation of the last decade. (Actually, the inside of the personal computer is a largely American affair, with the important storage system consisting of a Komag disc, a Conner, Quantum, or Seagate drive, and a Read-Rite magnetic head.) Intel's ground-breaking semiconductor work has also vaulted it far ahead of the Japanese in parallel computing, the fastest and most powerful form of computing available. Intel's dominance is not a fluke: it outspends the Japanese on research and development as well as on plant and equipment, and brings new products to market faster than its Asian counterparts. In the process, it makes nearly a billion dollars in profit per year.

As aggressive as Intel has been inside the computer, Hewlett-Packard, a Palo Alto-based company, is only beginning to get the recognition it deserves for helping the United States take back leadership in consumer and capital goods—those used for large-scale enterprises. Like Intel, Hewlett dominates the market in products most people believe we gave up to the Japanese long ago. It owns the market for laser-jet printers, and is far ahead of the Japanese in the two most significant new computing trends: workstations for engineers and scientists, souped-up computers that can create three-dimensional representations and work at many times the speed of an ordinary personal computer; and palm-

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tops, computers the size of your palm. In fact, Hewlett has much less to fear from the Japanese than it does from U.S. rivals Sun Microsystems and Silicon Graphics, two workstation manufacturers that didn't even exist ten years ago. Not content with its current stable of technological products, Hewlett now intends to be the world leader in interactive television video, an industry that a decade ago would have been avoided by U.S. companies for fear of going head-to-head with the Japanese.

These examples are not isolated. Picturetel, a ten-year-old Massachusetts company, has established a commanding lead in interactive picture phones, well ahead of several Japanese concerns, by being the lowest-cost manufacturer and by strategic discounting, two tricks learned from the Japanese. Microsoft and Novell dominate in worldwide software and network-linked computer systems and have led the way out of the wilderness of slow, dull mainframes and into the community of innovative, high-powered machines that can talk to each other.

These successes have gone unnoticed in all the self-flagellation about our lack of competitiveness, even as we regained the title of largest exporter and have shrunk the trade deficit to a fraction of its former size. Why has this happened? For two simple reasons: cars and VCRs. Despite our firm grasp on many high-profit-margin capital goods (Boeing planes, Caterpillar tractors, Deere farm implements, etc.), the competitiveness debate gets framed around these two areas for the simple reason that they are consumer goods that everyone buys.

Auto production in particular has managed to cloud the true picture of America's manufacturing strength for almost a decade now, as the Big Three systematically have thrown away every advantage given them by the government. First, managements blew what should have been a huge windfall produced by the government's dollar-bashing strategy and the Japanese import restraints by raising prices in lockstep with those forced on foreign competitors by the dollar's decline. With this single step, they eliminated the price advantage exploited so well by other, more thoughtful domestic competitors and picked up no market share.

Second, all three of the auto manufacturers took the massive profits they earned during the Reagan years and plowed them into foolish diversification efforts and worse: stock buybacks and higher dividends. Ford bought Jaguar for $2.5 billion in 1989, when auto companies were flush from a string of good sales years. The No. 2 American automaker could have purchased the British manufacturer, in bankruptcy a few years later, for nothing. GM ventured into defense at the market peak in 1985 with its ill-fated acquisition of Hughes, which makes military aircraft and satellites. And Chrysler, which bought Gulfstream Aerospace in 1985, sold it for a $664 million loss in 1990. All three spent billions propping up their stocks at double and even triple current prices by buying back shares when the market was strong. When the recession came, these cash-poor companies had to sell off shares at a fraction of what they paid just to stay solvent last year.

Finally, these car companies are just beginning to put into effect the cost reductions and layoffs other industrial companies not protected by trade barriers initiated years ago. For years auto layoffs were largely piecemeal attempts to postpone the obvious, which was that they would never regain the market share lost to the Japanese. Layoffs were considered temporary. Now the auto companies are closing plants permanently, in recognition of the fact that they will never dominate the U.S. market the way they once did. It is fitting that the end of the recession is arriving just as General Motors has finally decided to close plants it should have shuttered years ago.

VCRs are a different issue. American manufacturers virtually ceded the low-level consumer electronics industry to the Japanese in favor of higher-margined capital goods. Companies such as GE and Unisys have decided that there's no reason to get into a corporate life-threatening battle over televisions—where nobody, including the Japanese, makes money—when they can own the field in areas like laser printing, or dominate videophones, where profits can be much greater. At Xerox former CEO David Kearns decided to give up on low-tech photocopying machines in favor of high-end imaging, a technique that can be used to print a phone book in seconds, and a multibillion-dollar field that Xerox now dominates.

The point, Americans have discovered, is that it doesn't make sense to be mindlessly competitive in every area. The more sensible strategy is to be dominant and profitable in those areas where you can be. Let the Japanese have consumer electronics; we'll keep capital goods: aircraft, computers, communications, and medical instruments, all much bigger ticket items. The United States still maintains a trade surplus of $27 billion in aircraft and parts, as well as a $6.7 billion surplus in professional, scientific, and controlling instruments.

The structural overhaul of American industry will remain invisible so long as everyone keeps thinking in terms of cars and VCRs. Shareholders of the winners and other speculators who spot the trends will continue to prosper. That does nothing, of course, for those who have lost their jobs in the transformation: according to the Labor Department, the percentage of the work force employed in manufacturing shrank from 22.3 percent to 17.6 percent in 1992. The irony is that American industry needed—and still needs—to reduce the size of its work force in order to prosper and grow. Unfortunately, some politicians want to appease those angry about unemployment by installing trade barriers to protect our remaining unreformed industries. This is the one policy change that could undermine the New Dominance before it has a chance to show its might. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Some Problems, Some Pleasures

Václav Havel wrote recently:

> The return of freedom to a place that became morally unhinged has produced something that it clearly had to produce, and therefore something we might have expected. But it has turned out to be far more serious than anyone could have predicted: an enormous and blindingly visible explosion of every imaginable human vice.

We read these words in the West and think we understand them. But how can we plumb the bitterness—the *foreseen* bitterness, says Havel—that people in the newly liberated East must feel? Particularly if, like Havel and other Czech, Polish, Hungarian playwrights and filmmakers, they created artworks about oppression under communism and the hunger for freedom.

Here is a pinch of salt to rub in the wound—**The Ear** (Ifex), a Czech film that was made in 1970, was banned until quite recently, and is now given its New York theatrical premiere at the Film Forum. *The Ear* was written by Karel Kachyňa, who directed, and Jan Procházka, long-term collaborators who have been compared as a team to De Sica-Zavattini and Carné-Prevert. *The Ear* was the Czech pair's last joint work. Procházka, says Josef Škvorecký, became a main target of governmental persecution because of the bugging of a friend's house, which provided the police with a frank record of Procházka's views. All that saved him from prison was illness and, in 1971, death. (Kachyňa survived professionally by turning to children's films.) The bugging that undid Procházka seems especially grim because bugging and political fright are the subjects of *The Ear.*

A high-ranking Prague official and his wife return, somewhat the worse for champagne and vodka, to their fairly luxe home after a state party at which they heard some cryptic remarks. They find their doors unlocked and the electricity off. The husband is convinced that he is a marked man; he and his wife have a series of late-night quarrels about this and other such matters even after the electricity is mysteriously restored. Then comes an early-morning visit by a group of political revelers on their way home from that same party; they carouse, overweeningly, then leave. The husband and wife are now convinced that this visit was part of a scheme to incriminate him. They discover a number of electronic bugs scattered through their house. Shortly after dawn the telephone rings. News arrives that puts a cynical twist on everything that we have seen and heard.

The compressed, patterned form of the screenplay—it's a two-character drama, except for the revelers' brief interruption—is a bit too neat. We are almost as conscious of the script-tailoring, the arrangements of incidents like a morality play, as we are of the chilling theme. But Kachyňa directs it intensely, almost expressionistically. His usual cinematographer, Josef Illík, gives most of the faces the ghastly naturalism of tabloid-newspaper photos. The performances by Radoslav Brzobahaty and Jirina Bohdalova are vivid, especially Bohdalova's. She portrays a woman confined by strictures who burrows into private domains, some of them petty, to find compensation.

About the courage of all the people involved in the making of this film in 1970, praise from the comfy West would verge on the obscene. And now after twenty years of suppression, *The Ear* is released into the Czechoslovakia whose president describes his country as above. I wonder if Havel—surely the finest spirit in public life since Pope John XXIII—has seen *The Ear* and, if so, what he thinks of it today.

Well, perhaps he told us, further along in the same article:

> The former regime systematically mobilized the worst human qualities, like selfishness, envy, and hatred. This was far from merely being something we deserved: it was, at the same time, responsible for the way we became.

A letter from a reader reproved me, gently, on the subject of Emma Thompson. Summarizing her film career to date in my review of *Howards End,* I had omitted her role in **The Tall Guy** (1989). The reader advised me to rent the tape. I hurried to take his advice, and I send blessings from the heart to my correspondent.

I vaguely remember *The Tall Guy* passing through, and I don't know why I missed it. Thank heaven it's on tape. First, Thompson. In this sprightly romantic comedy set in London today, she plays a businesslike, pert, reservedly sexy nurse. At her hospital she treats an

FILMS WORTH SEEING

American Dream. *Barbara Kopple, who made* Harlan County, U.S.A., *presents another excellent documentary about a (quite different) strike—Minnesota meatpackers in the 1980s. Gripping and important. (Reviewed 4/13/92)* **Howards End.** *A boon. Not only are the performances by Vanessa Redgrave, Emma Thompson, and Anthony Hopkins magnificent, the adaptation of Forster as such serves him honorably. (3/23/92)* **JFK.** *The controversy still rages. Oliver Stone's imaginative/fanciful work remains essential viewing. (1/27/92)* **Noises Off.** *A farce about the rehearsal and performance of a farce. Many laughs and even more laffs. Michael Caine heads a nicely nutty cast, Peter Bogdanovich directs with zing. (4/20/92)* **—SK**

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American actor who lives and works in London and eventually has an affair with him that turns out to be more than an affair.

In one way I'm glad to have missed *The Tall Guy* until after I saw Thompson's Margaret Schlegel. This adds to the wonder: because she plays the nurse—all first-class actors do this—as if this mod environment were the only one she could imagine, as if its colors and boundaries were exactly hers. It's like, for instance, seeing Glenda Jackson in *A Touch of Class* after seeing her as Charlotte Corday in *Marat/Sade*. Now I don't believe there's anything Thompson could not do—superbly. (A reliable friend tells me that she was first-class as Lear's fool in Kenneth Branagh's production of the play.) More, please, more, more, more, and all of it varied.

The whole film is like a breeze. The actor is played by Jeff Goldblum, at his lanky, funny-pathetic best. The script is by Richard Curtis, the direction by Mel Smith, both new to me but known figures in British TV. The élan of the film, its carefree yet finely tuned comedy, is the best of its kind that I've seen since the early Richard Lester (*The Knack*) and the early Philippe de Broca (*The Joker*).

The Tall Guy is not the all-too-familiar case of a good performance trapped in a poor picture. Thompson is just as delightful as the film and vice versa. Thanks again, reader.

The Power of One (Warner Bros.) and **City of Joy** (Tri-Star) represent huge investments. The first was made mostly in South Africa, the second in Calcutta; obviously much time, energy, and money went into attaining physical authenticity. Then, onto this authenticity, two offensively trite screenplays were foisted.

The Power of One follows an English boy, born in South Africa in 1930, through the Second World War and through his initiation into ideas of racial equality—all in a series of pietistic setups that creak with artifice. Only Morgan Freeman, shaven-headed, as a prisoner in a camp for political detainees, gives this picture a breath of life.

City of Joy is about a young American surgeon—Patrick Swayze, if you can believe it (you can't)—under whose scalpel a child dies and who flees to Calcutta to pull himself together. He joins a clinic-hostel called City of Joy. Does he, by picture's end, pull himself together? Are you kidding?

Amid all the artificial setups of *this* film, some of the Indian actors are very taking, notably Om Puri as a peasant who lost his farm and moved to Calcutta with his wife and children to find work. Puri is much too truthful an actor for the gelatinous mess in which he is here trapped. •

Who Will Win the 21st Century?

"If the world wants to play hardball," says economist Lester Thurow, *"we'll play hardball."*

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On January 1, 1993, when Europe becomes the largest economic entity in the world, global competition will take a fierce new turn. Which of the three economic superpowers will take the lead? Has America already decided to lose?

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"It's time we put the *real* capitalists back in the driver's seat," says Thurow.

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A defense of the late, scolding Tolstoy.

The Old Magician

By Irving Howe

> *The old magician stands before me, alien to all, a solitary traveler through all the deserts of thought, in search of an all-embracing truth which he has not found—I look at him and, although I feel sorry for the loss, I feel pride at having seen the man.*
>
> —Maxim Gorky, *Reminiscences*

Reading the aged Tolstoy stirs the heart. He will not yield to time, sloth, or nature. He clings to the waist of the life force. Deep into old age, he battles with the world, more often with himself, returning in his diaries, fictions, and tracts to the unanswerable questions that torment him. Blessed old magician, he is free of literary posture and the sins of eloquence.

"And what truth can there be," he demands of Chekhov, "if there is death?" Death will not pass him by, and its certainty dissolves all claims to meaning. (Levin in *Anna Karenina*: "I am working; I want to do something, and I had forgotten it will all end in death.") Yet a need for meaning allows him no rest, and finally it overcomes, provisionally, the absurdity in which he thinks that all must end. The state is evil, a "conspiracy" for "demoralizing" and "exploiting" the people, but the artist, as companion to reality, must acknowledge the power and thereby perhaps the charms of the state. In all but his late writings, the state takes on a human aspect, by no means the mere enemy that his "Christian anarchism" would make it out to be. Sexuality comes to seem deeply suspect, a blossom of evil, but the old man, still in the grip of male vanity, teases Chekhov: "I was an indefatigable fornicator" in my youth, and how about you? Firm in his rationalist version of Christianity, he also lives near the shadow of nihilism. One absolute bruises another.

The most painful but also fruitful of Tolstoy's contradictions is the one between the aesthetic and the ethical. The writer who would dismiss *Anna Karenina* ("there is no good in it") weeps with emotion upon hearing a Beethoven sonata. Determined to shake off the trivialities of literary representation—yet another triangle, yet another sensitive hero!—he can also write in his diary in 1903: "It's time to die and I'm still thinking up things for new stories." A year before his death, after producing all those doctrinal tracts (some very brilliant, by the way), he confides to his diary "the desire to do some literary work, but a real desire—not as before with a definite [moral] purpose, but without any purpose—or rather with an invisible purpose beyond my reach: to look into the human soul." The artistic side of Tolstoy may be subdued, but it is never quite destroyed.

I love the old magician in the way, I like to imagine, that Chekhov and Gorky loved him: for the restlessness of his mind, for his unquenchable desires. Of course he succumbs to moral crankiness, to demented attacks upon Shakespeare, to intemperate demands for temperance. But stubborn and even perverse, he remains faithful to the contradictions of his sensibility. In an astonishing entry in 1903, he writes in his diary: "The truth is always accessible to man"—as if it hardly bears notice that for seventy-five years he has been stumbling in the "deserts of thought," imploring like his Father Sergius, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief!"

In person Tolstoy was often insufferable, except of course when he chose to charm the heart out of you. His "style of old age" brought neither calm nor resignation—only weariness. Little time is left to him, and the truth, "always accessible," keeps slipping through his fingers; he must continue to grope and to search. There is no end to it.

"The more infectious art is," he writes in 1898, "the better it is. But whether this activity [art] is good or bad doesn't depend only on how far it satisfies the demands of art, i.e., on its infectiousness, but also on how far it satisfies the demands of religious awareness, i.e., morality, conscience." (A few decades later Eliot would say something fairly similar.) In 1897 Tolstoy speculates on the relations between art and morality:

> *The aesthetic and the ethical are two arms of one lever: to the extent to which one side becomes longer and heavier, the other side becomes shorter and lighter. As soon as a man loses his moral sense, he becomes particularly responsive to the aesthetic.*

He keeps looking for some stable position between the "two arms," a conciliation, if only in thought, between the aesthetic and the ethical. He never quite finds it, perhaps because no one can, but in such major fictions as "Master and Man" and "Father Sergius," as also in parts of his last novel, *Resurrection*, he can write as if indeed he has. The common complaint is that in old age Tolstoy became a scold, but it is beside the point, at least with regard to his fiction. For what happens is not at all an abandonment of art, but a radical change in the aesthetic motivating his art.

Nothing in the late Tolstoy reaches the "epic" largess of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, but several of the late writings are of a very high order. There is now less interest in the witnessing of life for its own pleasurable sake, less likelihood of aesthetic surprise revealed through a character in spontaneous behavior. And while the passion for enclosing an entire way of life that informs much nineteenth-century fiction—a passion that the earlier Tolstoy shared with Dickens and Balzac—is not wholly suppressed, it is subordinated to a narrative pointing up the relation between depicted event and thematic line.

There are, to be honest, a few instances in which Tolstoy's ethical imperiousness does overwhelm the aesthetic pattern, but even in so notorious a story as "The Kreutzer Sonata," with all its revulsion from human sexuality and its tirades against male desire and female coquetry, there are still keen renderings, still Tolstoyan insights into the miseries of marriage. What he would call "the tragedy of the bedroom" is strongly insinuated as a universal plight of *post coitum tristesse*, the hostility between the sexes after "the cessation of sexuality." This quoted phrase comes from Podznyshev, the *raisonneur* of "The Kreutzer Sonata," and we must assume that he serves as Tolstoy's mouthpiece, so unrelenting is his voice and so little resistance does the story, through other characters or Tolstoy himself, offer to his wrath. Excessive, even brutal, "The Kreutzer Sonata" is far from Tolstoy at his best. Yet only hopeless romantics would deny that even in this dour story Tolstoy seizes upon fragments of truth.

In the late Tolstoy the relationship between the aesthetic and the ethical is always unsettled—by no means the monolithic dogmatism that many readers and critics have supposed. Let me glance briefly at a few of the late stories

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Irving Howe is the author most recently of *Selected Writings, 1950-1990* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

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and then a bit more fully at *Resurrection*.

In "Master and Man" (1895), the ethical thrust emerges even before the narrative climax, but no matter: in this sort of quasi-allegorical piece that does no harm. So gratifying is the narrative on its own and so elegantly does the ethical suffuse the action that we become quite content to be led to a foreseeable conclusion. The merchant Brekhunov and his servant Nikita get lost on a journey during a snowstorm; their sled provides shelter at refuge; the merchant, snug in his fur coat, throws himself upon the freezing body of the servant. "At first and for a long time Nikita lay motionless, then he sighed deeply and moved. 'There and you say you are dying! Lie still and get warm, that's our way ...,' began [Brekhunov]."

In part "Master and Man" is a fable of fraternity, with signs of status brushed aside; it clearly follows Tolstoy's fixed design more than any strong sense of verisimilitude. But Tolstoy's design—some would say his will—is so commanding that we grant him a fusion of image and idea. Crucial and touching is Brekhunov's remark, "That's our way." What way? The piety of God-fearing Russians, the noblesse oblige of the gentry, the democracy of all mankind, or what? It hardly matters, the power of the story rests in its openness of possibility.

Another late story, "Father Sergius" (1898), centers on a figure so fierce in moral passion one is tempted to see him as a surrogate of Tolstoy. Prince Kasatsky forsakes the ugly world to become a monk. But he remains captive to his "passion for distinguishing himself," a passion not exactly unknown to Tolstoy himself. Now called Father Sergius, he still wishes "to be [morally] above those who considered themselves his superiors." He undergoes a series of tests, the first of these with a society beauty who schemes to lure him into a sexual encounter, which he can resist only by the desperate act of chopping off a finger. In the eyes of both Tolstoy and his character this is a sign of weakness, but it also wins Father Sergius fame as a holy man unrelenting in rectitude. There follows a sequence of tragicomic confusions in which he is beset by pilgrims begging for miracle cures. He tries to resist, but again the drives of his character, his "true self," push him into acts of vanity that, to all but himself, seem saintly. In a last reaching toward humility, Father Sergius is seen as a hired hand in Siberia, bowing to man and earth, but Tolstoy refrains from telling us whether the monk has indeed managed to subdue his will.

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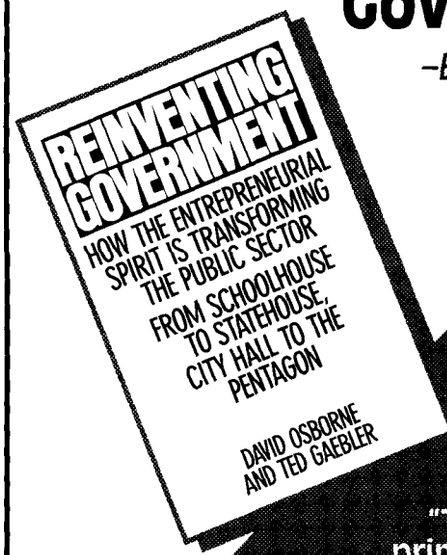
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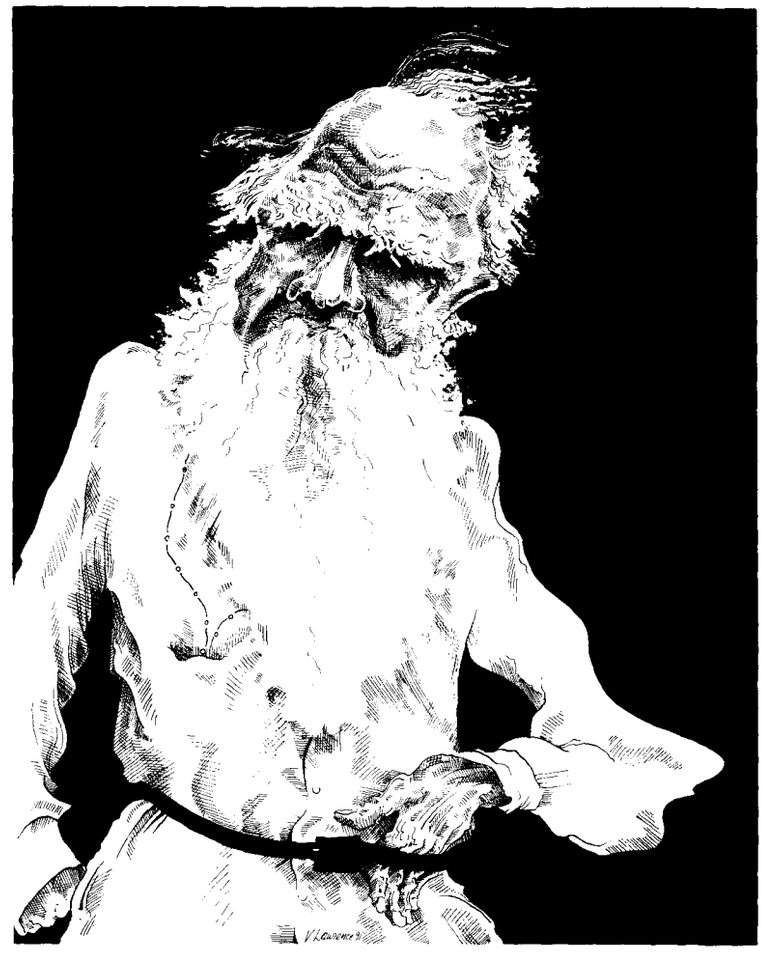
Life itself, this bitterly ironic story suggests, is the temptation: life, and the world in which it must be endured. About "Father Sergius" Tolstoy said, "The old man wrote it well," and he was right: surface and suggestions are neatly joined. Or almost neatly joined, for when Father Sergius turns toward an old peasant woman for a way out of his self-torments and finds comfort in her unassuming goodness, one feels an uneasiness that always follows Tolstoy's resort to the saintliness of the simple.

The great narrative "Hadji Murad" (1904) has often been praised as an instance of how the old Tolstoy abandoned his tiresome moralizing and returned to the purity of art. But that is a misreading. For Tolstoy, as perhaps for all serious writers, the purity of art can be achieved only through the impurity of moral substance. Actually, this supposedly unmarred narrative advances all of the aged Tolstoy's ideas and sentiments: the rejection of worldly authority, both Russian and Tatar, which underlies his "Christian anarchism" (the great Russian critic Boris Eichembaum calls it "social anarchism"); the disdain for all bureaucratic styles of conduct, whether in public affairs or private relations; the sympathy for "the outsider," here the Tatar chieftain Hadji Murad, who can find a place neither among his own people nor the Russian conquerors. Seamless, even blithe as the prose surface appears, the story is full of dramatized thought and inducements to persuasion. As John Bayley has nicely remarked, "The parabolic conception of art which he had come to hold had the unexpected effect of making his artistry seem more and not less evident—the smell of art is the smell of a moral."

These entanglements of the aesthetic and the ethical—there is no literature without them—reach a point of crisis in *Resurrection* (1899), a novel one can neither live with easily nor abandon with a good conscience. The book is little read, condemned by the received opinion that once again the old scold has brushed aside the pleasures of creativity for the aridity of dogma. Even more moderate opinions suggest that while there are fine portions, especially the idyllic flashbacks to the youth of the protagonist Prince Nekhlyudov (these might almost have been written by the young Tolstoy), most of the book resembles an irritable tract. But *Resurrection* is much richer in felt life and far less monochromatic than "The Kreutzer Sonata," if only because the novel as a form forces Tolstoy to reveal himself.

Still, the usual disparagement of *Resurrection* has some truth. We no longer encounter many of those seemingly spontaneous touches of incident and characterization—the surprises of recognition—that light up the earlier novels. We no longer enjoy the free interaction between two or more minds, while Tolstoy retains a serene distance from them. Something has happened, a shift from the depiction of life to a stringent interpretation—but that puts the matter too simply, for there is plenty of interpretation in the earlier Tolstoy and a quantity of depiction in the later. Say, rather, that in *Resurrection* we are always aware that his artistry is driven by "a definite purpose," certainly more doctrinal than the purpose of "looking into the human soul."



TOLSTOY BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The story seems to be known to many people who have not read the book. Prince Nekhlyudov, well born and pleasing in manner, seduces the young maid Katusha, and thoughtlessly abandons her. Years later, serving as a juror in a sordid trial, he recognizes a defendant, a worn-out woman of the streets, as the once lovely girl he had seduced. Again through the carelessness that Tolstoy saw as a privilege of the powerful, Nekhlyudov acquiesces in her conviction, though she is in fact innocent. But then, through a severe scrutiny of his past, he undergoes a change of mind—more than a change of heart—and recognizes that he is responsible for Katusha's plight. In an act of contrition, he accompanies the wronged woman to Siberia, and in the same rational spirit he offers to marry her; but Katusha, sensing the dryness of his decision, refuses him. Finally, Nekhlyudov begins "an entirely new life," though what it will be like and whether the effort will succeed Tolstoy, as at the end of "Father Sergius," shrewdly avoids saying. And perhaps it is just as well.

There is a sense in which *Resurrection* is the most Dostoyevskian of Tolstoy's novels, dealing as it does with themes of guilt, self-accusation, and renewal. While this gives it a strong interest, it does not account for what I take to be the power of the book. The modern reader is likely to find Nekhlyudov's self-transformation less exalting, certainly less exciting, than Raskolnikov's in *Crime and Punishment*. A Tolstoyan in style of thought, Nekhlyudov goes through his conversion largely as an exercise in rational self-understanding. He makes a considered moral judgment, so that his "purging of the soul," in Tolstoy's phrase, seems to lack the high rapture of a Dostoyevskian spiritual conversion. There is a certain dryness to Nekhlyudov's experience, especially if it is detached from the encasing reflections of Tolstoy. "Life only requires us to do what is right," says Nekhlyudov to his

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sister, to which she replies "with a sigh." That sigh is one of Tolstoy's sharp details, disqualifying the thrust of his "moral purpose."

Tolstoy is not really the master of reincarnation that Dostoyevsky is. We are told by Tolstoy that the youthful Nekhlyudov has entered "a state of exaltation" upon discovering "all the beauty and significance of life.... That year he had read [Herbert] Spencer's *Social Statics*." It is possible that serious readers in the late nineteenth century felt otherwise, but by now the linkage of "exaltation" and Spencer seems faintly comic.

The spiritual wanderings of Pierre Bezhukhov in *War and Peace* are not only comforted by Tolstoy's affectionate smile, they are climaxed at the end by the portrayal of Pierre as a reflective man who is deeply troubled, perhaps soon to become a Decembrist. At the very last page we still cannot quite fix Pierre: he slips out of our descriptions. Nekhlyudov's conversion, by contrast, though it is rendered with much earnestness, seems settled in advance. In fairness to the old Tolstoy, I should add that he focuses upon moments of smugness that mark Nekhlyudov's ponderings, quite as he had recognized the pride behind Father Sergius's dives into humiliation.

When Nekhlyudov tells Katusha that it is he who had wronged her, Tolstoy remarks: "The idea that, on moral grounds, he was ready to sacrifice everything and marry her made him feel very warm and tender toward himself...." But Katusha—this is another fine moment—will not let Nekhlyudov "make use of her spiritually as he had done physically, nor would she allow herself to be an object for magnanimity on his part":

> "Go away from me! I am a convict and you are a prince, and you have no business here," she cried, her whole face distorted with anger.... "You want to save yourself through me.... You had your pleasure from me in this world, and now you want to get your salvation through me in the world to come! You disgust me—with your spectacles and your fat ugly mug!"

That Katusha, in her anger, should notice his "fat ugly mug" is the kind of enhancing detail we expect from Tolstoy at any age.

The old master could still command the resources of his art when he chose to, but the argument I want to make for *Resurrection* depends mainly on a riskier perception. If a case can be made for the greatness of *Resurrection*, it is not of the kind we are likely to provide with regard to most novels. The greatness of this book resides not primarily in the narrative of Nekhlyudov's journey from betrayal to contrition, nor in the finely (if faintly) drawn figure of Katusha as innocent maiden and exploited woman. It resides in the things that happen near and about these figures; in the events for which they serve mainly as literary auxiliaries or catalysts; in the thickly brushed depictions of what the world calls justice, of the sadism it calls punishment, of the heartlessness of what it declares to be civilization, of the humiliations of those forgotten and obscure souls upon whom it turns its back. Here Tolstoy's "Christian anarchism" comes into full play, not just as a theoretical option or an ideological position, but as a great upswell of moral fury.

Bayley, though he is a critic responsive to these of Tolstoy's late writings, writes that the rejection of "worldliness" that he rightly sees as a central motif in *Resurrection* leads Tolstoy to "close his eyes to the kind of justice which [worldliness] may be capable of administering, even in a corrupt society." A standard rebuttal might be that Bayley doesn't really engage Tolstoy's novel, since he is making a reasonable argument for a moderate liberalism while Tolstoy is composing a work of the literary imagination, and the two move along different planes of discourse. But such a rebuttal would be too easy, for *Resurrection* is by design a tendentious novel, and critics ought to have the right to

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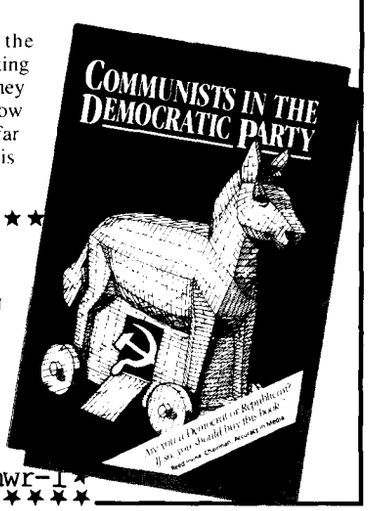

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make tendentious criticisms.

Tolstoy writes here both as an artist and a rhetorician. He wants both to create a work of art and also to convert readers to a moral position. And he approaches us from a prophetic stance, so that his moral condemnations must be as sweeping as those of prophets usually are. He cannot stop to notice, let alone accept, the reasonable view that a measure of justice may be possible even in a "corrupt" society. And this for at least two reasons. First, he offers the tacit but strong argument that the conditions prevailing in czarist Russia make the unjust trial at the center of the book entirely typical (if not inevitable). Second, he writes out of a deep persuasion that the very presence of organized government entails injustice—and at this point his prophetic stance and his Christian anarchism come together.

In every prophetic posture there is likely to be a strain of anarchism: a total rejection of society as it exists, an unqualified assault upon the prevalent morality, all declared with impatience and ultimatistic righteousness. That is one reason why prophetic utterances can be tremendously powerful while still being taken more as an incitement to conscience than a guide to action. The prophet's cry is not reasonable in the way that Bayley's critical point is; that cry cannot be met by declaring his case to be extreme, since he has made it precisely in order to be extreme. The old Tolstoy has no interest in compromise.

The central thrust of *Resurrection* draws upon Tolstoy's moral passion as it becomes, so to say, an autonomous presence, almost a "character" in the novel, released at times through direct authorial statement and at other times through scenes such as those that show the sufferings of prisoners on the way to Siberia. If you start with a strict Flaubertian conception of fiction, all this will seem superfluous and unintegrated, a mere flaunting of opinion, but Tolstoy rejected such a conception of the novel. The old man looms before us, grand in his dishevelment, refusing to make peace with the world, ferocious in his judgment and his monomania. He looms *within* the novel, his voice filling every space, speaking as the godlike judge who will not heed moderate cautions but keeps asking the one question before which even the most humane liberalism must tremble: "Why should these things be?"

The shackled prisoners march through the city, and a little boy

> knew without any doubt—he was quite sure, for he had the knowledge straight from God, that these people were just the same as he and everyone else was, and therefore something wicked had been done to them, something that ought not to be done and he was sorry for them, and horrified not only at the people who were shaved and fettered but at the people who had shaved and fettered them.

I doubt anyone but the old Tolstoy could get away with saying that the little boy's knowledge comes "straight from God." And then the scene in which the prisoners lie about in the Siberian muck and Nekhlyudov sees that

> all the vices which developed among the convicts ... were neither accidents nor signs of mental and physical degeneration ... but that they were the inevitable result of the delusion that one group of human beings has the right to punish another.

I wish to be clear. The case I am proposing—it can be validated, if at all, only by a full reading of the book—is not, as a sympathetic reader has put it, that Tolstoy in *Resurrection* "stepped outside the framework of pure art." No, it is that the force of Tolstoy's moral passion becomes transformed into something very much like the matter of art. Transformed into the matter of art and also of a truth that, like the little boy, he has "straight from God." For if God were to vouchsafe it to anyone, who else could it be but the old magician? •

Chinese Shadows

BY JONATHAN SPENCE

Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China by Robert P. Newman

(University of California Press, 669 pp., $30)

On May 18, 1955, a little more than five years after Senator Joseph McCarthy had accused Owen Lattimore of being "the top Russian spy" operating in the United States, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and President Dwight D. Eisenhower had an illuminating telephone conversation. As summarized by Dulles in notes jotted down at the time, the exchange ran as follows:

> The Pres. returned the call, and the Sec. said we are having a problem re giving a passport to Lattimore. Adams thought I should speak to you about it. I have the feeling that it is better if you are not consulted about it as it is hot. I am in close touch with Brownell and what we do would be what we agree on. The Pres. asked if there is any law that affects it? The Sec. said he is under indictment. The Pres. said oh, he is?

The president's blithe ignorance of the turmoil that Lattimore had been enduring for so long is remarkable, given the incredible barrage of national publicity that had accompanied the Lattimore investigations, but in fact Lattimore's long ordeal was almost over. On June 28, 1955, Attorney General Herbert Brownell issued a brief statement that his office saw "no reasonable likelihood of a successful prosecution on the five counts remaining" against Lattimore, and therefore would bring "this litigation to a conclusion." That same evening Lattimore received the news in Stockholm, where he was on vacation with his wife. "We went to a hotel balcony overlooking an arm of the harbor," he wrote to a friend a few days later, "and ordered champagne and smoked salmon and smoked reindeer, and drank a toast to all the many people without whom we'd never have survived."

The taste of reindeer meat on the tongue at the moment of vindication seems a fitting image for Owen Lattimore, a man who had been a wanderer and student of Central Asian nomads for most of his life. Raised in China, schooled in Switzerland, his scholarly passion throughout his long life (1900-89) was for the Mongols: he loved them for their humor, their toughness, and their past glories, and he suffered with them over their current predicament as they fought for survival between the rival forces of Russia and China. Lattimore struggled much of his life to nurture individual Mongol scholars, and to fit the study of Mongol life, history, and culture in the curriculum of American and European universities. From the publication of *Desert Road to Turkestan* in 1929, in his best-known book *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (1940), and in *Nomads and Commissars* (1962), Lattimore was consistent in his attempts to illuminate the political and economic realities of the Mongols. On the whole, Lattimore found the depredations of the Japanese and the

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Chinese to be even worse than those of the Soviets, though all three had wrought great damage to Mongol rights and hopes. Suitably enough, the benediction when he died in Providence, Rhode Island, was a poem written specially in his memory and read aloud by one of his closest Mongol friends.

How extraordinary it is that the entire central span of Lattimore's creative and scholarly life should have been ravaged by an internecine battle within the government of the United States about his alleged role in the "loss of China" to the Communists, and his own suspected Communist affiliations. Various parts of this story have been told before, with the best of the initial reports being the one in the December 27, 1955, issue of this magazine by "Brian Gilbert," the pen name of the political journalist Roger Kennedy. Gilbert meticulously charted the growth of the assaults on Lattimore's integrity, which began with Alfred Kohlberg's charges in 1944 that the Institute for Pacific Relations, for which Lattimore had long worked, was riddled with "Reds," and intensified with an article by Max Eastman in *Reader's Digest* in 1945, in which Eastman stated that Lattimore was "perhaps the most subtle evangelist" for the idea that the Soviet Union was a "democracy" and that Chiang Kai-shek was running a "fascist" regime.

The charges continued with the former Communist Louis Budenz's damaging yet evasive statements to the Tydings Committee in 1950 that Lattimore was "considered" to be a Communist by other Party members, and had been given the specific assignments of printing the Soviet line on China policy, denigrating Chiang Kai-shek, and presenting the Chinese Communists as "agrarian reformers." These accusations reached their nadir in hearings in the Senate before McCarran's Internal Security subcommittee, and the pressing of perjury charges against Lattimore by the Justice Department under the needling of the ambitious and destructive Roy Cohn.

There were seven perjury charges in all, which the government prosecutors drew from the long months of hearings and interrogations to which Lattimore had been subjected. The most important to the government was the charge that Lattimore had lied when he stated under oath that he had never been "a promoter of communism or Communist interests." Five of the other six charges concerned statements by Lattimore that he had not used his editorial position on the journal *Pacific Affairs* to publish work by authors he knew to be Communists, and that he had not associated with Soviet and Chinese Communists on two stated occasions. The seventh was an elaborate argumentation as to whether Lattimore had "handled" Lauchlin Currie's White House mail when Currie was away on assignment in China for the president. Currie, one of FDR's favorites, had often discussed China policy with Lattimore and had given him occasional access to White House China-related material.

Gilbert made an especially acute analysis of the meaning and the nature of the perjury charges leveled against Lattimore, citing McCarthy's own statement to the Tydings Committee on the way to catch Communists: "It is hard to get them for their criminal activities in connection with espionage, but a way has been found. We are getting them for perjury and putting some of the worst of them away." As Gilbert showed, Judge Luther Youngdahl, in rejecting the key counts of the government's vaguely phrased perjury indictment, had argued that "it is fundamental that a jury should not be asked to determine an issue which can be decided only on conjecture." And, as Gilbert went on to say, "the crux of the perjury charge [was] what did Owen Lattimore 'mean'? A statement may be false, and still not be perjury. The speaker must know it is false when he makes it." Later in 1955, in his study of Youngdahl, Robert Esbjornson reflected at length on the Lattimore case, concluding that "the law against perjury was misused" and the govern-

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ment's activities constituted a "travesty of due process of law," while "the use of congressional investigations for establishing the guilt of American citizens is one of the most dangerous threats to civil liberties and to justice that has developed in recent years."

For his book *The American Inquisition*, which appeared in 1982, Stanley Kutler was given access by Lattimore to some of the FBI files that he had obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. Kutler was thus able to add a new level of background data to his inquiry, which reinforced his conclusion that "the official intimidation of Lattimore was pernicious" and specifically that "the manner of that intimidation, resorting as it did to a disingenuous use of perjury charges, struck at the vitals of constitutional liberty and a free society." And now Robert P. Newman, in a long and closely argued book, has drawn all these and scores of other past evaluations of the Lattimore case together, combining them with a meticulous analysis of the major congressional hearings, an exhaustive review of Lattimore's own published writings and private papers, and scrutiny of the staggering 38,000 pages of FBI files that the bureau collected on Lattimore between 1941 and the 1970s.

Newman's book was written with Lattimore's support and encouragement, and so it approximates an authorized biography. Still, Newman's forays into a wide range of archives have been so adventuresome that his book stands on its own as a valuable contribution to modern American history. The vignettes on Eisenhower and the smoked reindeer, for example, were found by Newman respectively in the "John Foster Dulles Telephone Calls Series" in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library at Abilene, Kansas, and in the Joseph C. O'Mahoney Papers at the University of Wyoming's Coe Library in Laramie. It is hard to imagine that this comprehensive and engrossing study of Lattimore's life, works, and tribulations will ever be superseded, at least by those who believe that Lattimore was innocent of the charges levied against him. But so deep were the emotions in this case that those convinced that Lattimore must have been guilty of *something* will doubtless still produce their own variants of John T. Flynn's conclusion in his bitter polemic *The Lattimore Story*: "The 'liberal' cliché that Lattimore was 'cleared' of the perjury charges is, of course, ridiculous."

What Newman's study documents in shattering and depressing detail is how Lattimore was deliberately entrapped by trained investigators. In particular, it shows the many ways that "evidence" against him was manipulated and distorted, especially by the constant "feeding" of government witnesses; the illegal obtaining of documents by government agencies seeking to further their case; and the withholding from Lattimore himself of crucial documents that he needed in preparing his own defense. It is certainly true that Lattimore fought back with anger and sarcasm at his antagonists, seeking to humiliate and to discredit them as they sought to humiliate and to discredit him. It was a hard battle for Lattimore, often in circumstances that made any careful reflection or recollection almost impossible. It was almost certainly the unremitting pressure, and the impossibility of checking the exact circumstances, that led him to confuse the dates on which he had once met the Soviet ambassador and to jumble the details of his arrangements with Lauchlin Currie, two items that were to later feature among the seven items on the perjury indictment.

Surely Newman's most important contribution to the Lattimore file, however, is his finding that there was *nothing* substantive against Lattimore in those tens of thousands of FBI pages, which represent thousands of hours spent by scores of agents checking out every "lead," however farfetched or grotesque. In Newman's sharply chosen phrases, the FBI was following up on "a veritable encyclopedia of hallucinations," and dealing with a "netherworld of fanatics, psychopaths, alcoholics, con artists, and demagogues." Looking back on this period of Lattimore's life, Newman can find "no adjective adequate to describe the insanity of the times, the corruption and unreliability of the informants, or the gullibility of senators and their staff." Yet even when J. Edgar Hoover warned Senate and Justice Department investigators that he had no hard evidence of any kind, nothing more than vaguely suggestive coincidences or inferences, the prosecutors kept right on with their attacks, though common sense or plain decency suggested that they give up and go home. As Cohn so nicely summarized his youthful role at Justice in a comment to Newman, "I was the kid who went to the party and peed in the lemonade."

A few years later, when all the agony was over and nobody had proved anything against Lattimore of any kind, he finally left the United States and went to teach in England, where he could develop Mongol and Chinese studies in comparative peace. Newman calls this part of his book "Recovery and Triumph," but it is hard to read it that way. Leeds was a good university and Lattimore made significant contributions there, developing undergraduate courses in Asian studies, setting up a program of exchanges with the Mongolian People's Republic, and completely revamping the Leeds library collections on China and Mongolia. But his own work scaled no new heights, and especially after his loyal and courageous wife, Eleanor, died in 1970, his life took on a hollow quality, boosted by visits to Mongolia, but distracted by loneliness and alcohol.

Lattimore always insisted that his academic colleagues at Johns Hopkins—where he served on the faculty off and on for twenty-five years—had been decent to him, though the university had not. Perhaps nothing in this period of Lattimore's life was shabbier than the rejection by Milton Eisenhower, the president of Johns Hopkins, of a request for research leave made by Lattimore in 1957 with the words, "Your primary concern for the advancement of scholarship at Johns Hopkins is yet to be persuasively demonstrated." At Leeds, at least, Lattimore had a chance to put such disappointments partly behind him, and to begin once more to build up a career of public lecturing and research that had become impossible in the United States.

The issues raised by Lattimore's troubled life are far from dead, even with the demise of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe and the official cessation of the cold war. For his life, as so vividly explained by Newman, was a struggle against misused government power. Whatever the merits of Lattimore's political judgments of the Chinese Nationalists and the Chinese Communists during World War II and the Civil War of 1946-49, of his belief that Chinese Nationalist threats to Mongolian autonomy were more serious than those of the Soviet Union, his elected representatives and their staffs had no right, in a democracy, to treat him as they did, however great the perceived sense of national danger.

Newman ends his detailed and somber tale with an attempt at optimism. We owe to Lattimore, he writes, "clear proof that it is possible for a single individual to prevail against a powerful committee of the U.S. Senate," but I don't read the story that way at all. Lattimore did "prevail," just, and in part because of his own courage and truculence. But he also prevailed because of the immense amount of pro bono legal skill and time put at his disposal by Abe Fortas, Thurman Arnold, and Paul Porter, legal resources that at the time were estimated

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to be worth $250,000 at going rates, and have been estimated more recently to exceed $2.5 million. Without such help Lattimore would have gone under. And even with the free help of that accomplished Washington law firm and its supporting staff, Lattimore was only saved from more agonizing court battles by the courage and the integrity of Judge Youngdahl. Youngdahl himself had a very close call: the appellate hearing to overrule his anti-government findings on the validity of the perjury charges against Lattimore was tied 4-4.

When I put Newman's book down after reliving these harrowing years, full of reminders of the abuses that can be carried out in the name of justice, I was saddened for this country. At the same time, the ambiguities of the whole tangled affair were underlined for me by the ignominious and self-generated fate of Abe Fortas under the Johnson administration (so finely told in a recent book by Laura Kalman). Fortas, who had defended Lattimore so tenaciously, so generously, and with so many public outbursts of righteous indignation on his client's behalf, was later forced to resign his seat on the Supreme Court because of his own arrogant disregard of basic tenets of proper judicial conduct.

Newman has done an admirable job of presenting Lattimore's predicament. Yet oddly enough, despite all the research, despite his ability to convey the nuances of character that he showed so well in his recent study of the romance between John Melby and Lillian Hellman, his subject remains evasive, a figure of high drama but low visibility. There are sides of Lattimore's nature that are not shown by Newman despite his meticulous documentation. One such side can be found among the rambling observations of Frederick Vanderbilt Field, a friend of Lattimore's for many years, scion of two multimillionaire families, and an unabashed espouser of Communist causes. Reaching across the past in his autobiography of 1983, *From Right to Left*, Field came up with a vision of a carefree young Lattimore that restores the victim to his due place in the human family.

As Field relates it, shortly before the war he, Owen, and Eleanor Lattimore set out to travel from Seattle to San Francisco for meetings in connection with the Institute of Pacific Relations. Field had a new toy, a Cadillac, equipped with the hottest new item on the American scene, "blowout-proof tubeless tires." As the trip progressed, the tires blew one by one, involving endless stops at gas stations, and eating up all their supplies of ready cash in repairs. But the trip remained a magical one, since "for hours on end during this discouraging and dreary journey" Owen Lattimore sang to his companions from his "seemingly inexhaustible repertoire of songs, mostly ribald." Surely many of them were the songs Lattimore had learned from the Mongol caravan men, with whom he had loved to travel huge distances in his youth. And I like to think that, in occasional moments of peace during the discouraging and dreary years of hearings, the same songs danced in his head, conjuring up a seemingly purer world, very far away.

JONATHAN SPENCE's new book, *Chinese Roundabout*, will be published by W. W. Norton this summer.

Monster of All Time

BY MICHAEL HEYWARD

Patrick White: A Life by David Marr

(Knopf, 727 pp., $30)

Patrick White dominated the public stage in Australia as no other writer ever did. By the last decade of his life, which ended in 1990, he was a towering figure, an old man with a gaunt, ravaged face and "mooncrater eyes" who raged at the nature of things like a Lear on some antipodean heath. He was famous for his demonic temper and for his merciless treatment of friends, whom he cast into outer darkness at the slightest provocation. Although it was no consolation to them, he punished himself for his shortcomings just as savagely. "I'm a failure as a human being," he told a friend the day after he had turned yet another dinner party into a nightmarish shouting match. He admitted he was like the appalling Waldo in his novel *The Solid Mandala*, and could not forgive people their weaknesses. "I am not good," he said another time. "I only know what good is." But he was also a generous man, and gave money to those he thought most in need of it. He pronounced on contemporary issues—nuclear disarmament, Aboriginal land rights, the fouling of the environment—like an Old Testament prophet. He dished out abuse to the prime minister of the day. He sent castigating letters to Ronald Reagan ("Come on, cowboy!") and Margaret Thatcher ("Search your heart, Mrs. Thatcher, if one exists behind the pearls").

In 1973 White won the Nobel Prize, the only Australian writer to do so, and his books became instant best sellers. When he published his autobiography, *Flaws in the Glass* (1981), only Frederick Forsyth outsold him in Australia. He was a household word in a period of emergent cultural nationalism that he did much to foster, when Australian artists began to feel for the first time that their country took pride in them. But no one better dramatized the traditionally awkward and hostile relationship between the Australian writer and his society than Patrick White. He loved Australia, but he loathed it too. And Australia, for its part, mostly took the blows of its prodigal son on the chin. The few bad reviews that he received, and the scandalous attempts in the 1960s to keep his plays out of the Adelaide Festival, became symbolic for him of a deep-seated local resentment; but for many he was a hero, a pioneer. After he won the Nobel Prize he was asked to take a seat on the floor of the House of Representatives to receive the congratulations of the Australian Parliament, an honor usually reserved for royalty and visiting heads of state. He politely declined.

White was born in London in the spring of 1912, but his parents brought him home to Australia a few months later. The baby was heir to one of the country's great pastoral fortunes: the Whites owned vast tracts of prime grazing country in New South Wales, where they ran sheep and cattle, stood for Parliament, and trained their thoroughbreds to dominate Australian racetracks. Paddy's mother, Ruth, who found life on the land rather dreary, was haughty, hot-tempered, Anglophile, and romantic: the Prince of Wales kissed her gloved hand one night and she kept the relic forever. Ruth wanted her son to have a brilliant career in keeping with his station. In this exemplary biography David Marr draws her as a formidable presence, charming and infuriating by turns, whom White came to resemble in many

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ways. Mother and son fought like alley cats, but he could never cut loose from her altogether. Because the two were so alike, she haunts the book.

White told Christina Stead that the most important characters in his work were latent versions of himself, but many of the memorable women in White's fiction found their source in Ruth: Mrs. Standish in *The Living and the Dead* (1941), Elizabeth Hunter in *The Eye of the Storm* (1973), Mrs. Golson in *The Twyborn Affair* (1979). This scourge of Australian mediocrity, and of social pretension of any kind, derived some of his hauteur from the commanding example set by his mother as she adorned Sydney's best drawing rooms. White's father, Dick, by contrast, was a shy and benign man, whose passions in life were watching cricket and seeing his horses win the Melbourne Cup. From him Patrick inherited his generous streak, but not much else.

Young Paddy's upbringing was narrow and snobbish. Ruth decided that she could not tolerate life on the Whites' great estates, so the boy grew up in his parents' mansion on Sydney Harbour. He was an awkward, unhappy, spiteful child, who once spat in his mother's face when she refused to give him sweets. He was also asthmatic: all his life the disease helped him to keep the world at bay, to foresee the anxieties and crises of the characters he conjured from his sick bed. He understood his illness as one of the things that made him a novelist.

His mother gave him a measured contempt for Australia. "I'm a Londoner at heart," he would say, "an anachronism, something left over from that period when people were no longer English but not yet indigenous." But neither Ruth (who forbade the boy to use "sloppy Australian vocabulary") nor Paddy understood that his lush, subtropical environment of palms and guava trees and bunya bunya pines would come to possess the imagination of the mature writer. "The cracks in the Sydney asphalt became part of me," White recalled, and so did the landscape of Mt. Wilson, his mother's rural retreat, with its sassafras and blackwood trees, waterfalls, parrots, and tree ferns. Here, and at Tudor House, a school where the boys mostly hunted rabbits, rode ponies, and collected birds' eggs, the boy discovered his childhood paradise, an Australia of enormous skies and vibrant colors. Marr makes the case that these edenic years became the bubbling fount of White's art, the pure well he could always draw from. And he communicates White's own semimythical sense of the plethora of aunts, uncles, and cousins whose eccentricities, nurtured by wealth and isolation in the bush, were inscribed in family lore. Part of the sumptuous effect of this book is to make the world that White came out of seem as rich as his fiction.

At 13 he was sent into exile, to public school in England, an event that further soured his feelings toward his mother—"I never forgave"—but preserved his early childhood in aspic. Cheltenham, where White completed his secondary education, with its damp and cold and entrenched systems of near sadism, turned a recalcitrant, difficult boy into a squib of a kid, a mouse whose only emotional outlet was to follow the careers of various West End starlets. Then White went up to Cambridge and completed an unremarkable degree.

The young man who would go unnoticed in a room full of people may have been a timid colonial in English society, but he was sure of his personal destiny. White had no doubt that he was a homosexual (his first affair was at Cambridge), and he knew that he was a writer. Since there was "nothing in Australia," he wanted to stay in England and make a reputation for himself. The only catch was that the life White wanted to lead depended on the privileges of his birth. At first his mother hesitated—she fancied her boy as a diplomat, gracing state rooms throughout Europe—but when his parents agreed to let him pursue his literary inclinations, they bestowed on him the princely allowance of £400 a year. Dick White's only condition was that his ugly duckling abandon his intention of publishing under a nom de plume. Patrick White the writer set up house in Belgravia and got to work.

From the early '30s until the outbreak of war, White did his best to turn himself into a London dandy. Stagestruck, he wrote plays that no one would produce. A photograph of the period has him in a trilby and three-piece suit, a cane dangling from one hand; he looks like a fop from an Edwardian drawing-room comedy. But the young man was also writing fiction and poetry. He had a brief affair with the expatriate Australian painter Roy de Maistre, who became a mentor to him. "I began to write from the inside out when Roy de Maistre introduced me to abstract painting," White remembered. "Before that I had only approached writing as an exercise in naturalism. Anything else was poetry." And he discovered Joyce and Lawrence: from Joyce he took the technical lesson of interiority and the monologue, from Lawrence the freedom to trust the surge and flare of intuition, the mercurial processes of thought and feeling that moment by moment make us what we are. He also liked the work of Gertrude Stein, who may have helped him overcome his fear that his fiction might be so much nonsense. "I don't know whether other authors experience what I do," he once confessed, "a feeling that they may be writing a secret language that nobody else will be able to interpret."

White got his first big break in 1939, when Geoffrey Grigson, who edited *New Verse* and worked as a reader for Harrap, convinced the publisher to buy *Happy Valley*, the first novel that White had begun writing before Cambridge, during a stint jackerooing on a sheep farm in a remote corner of New South Wales. But White was even more fortunate when that book, and the one he wrote after it, *The Living and the Dead*, came the way of

Dead Sea Bathers

What stillness their hearts must know, these bathers
laid out and glistening along the dissolve
of an ancient sea,

their bodies—so late from brief exercise,
so lately thrown down in exhaustion—
already marbled

with a fine white dust as they stretch across
straw pallets arranged by unseen servants
who, one supposes,

must see what we see. And how calm their thoughts,
these still brilliant shapes, as the mind's ebbing,
the heart's slow measure

lull the vessel and its oils, which now retard
to an all but breathless pace akin
to idiocy,

if saved from just that by the hum of faint
discomfort, that murmur beginning deep
as the flesh is fired.

Scott Cairns

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Ben Heubsch at Viking in New York. Heubsch immediately cottoned on to the ambition and the urgency of White's work. In the years to come, when publisher after publisher in London passed over White's work—*The Tree of Man* was rejected by as many as twenty English houses—Heubsch remained a loyal enthusiast, undeterred by the prospect of poor sales or incomprehension. Good books, he liked to tell White, must be given time to find their own audience.

Australian literary historians deserve to ponder the fact that the country's two greatest novelists, White and Stead, both found audiences and publishers in the United States—Simon and Schuster published Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children* in 1940—at a time when Australia was little more than an English province and English culture represented for Australians the pinnacle of prestige. (*The Man Who Loved Children* was not published in London until the mid-'60s, after Randall Jarrell championed it in a new American edition.) If Australia was a province, it had this peculiarity: the capital, London, was 12,000 miles away. Only a tiny fraction of its 6 or 7 million inhabitants in the 1930s had the means to pay it a visit. Thus most Australians had no tangible experience of the standards that they assumed to be the highest. Culture in Australia was largely in the hands of socialites and plutocrats like Ruth White, with her pearls and boulle and monogrammed china. Modernity had arrived in the form of the telephone, the motor car, the wireless, and the gramophone, but culture was either firmly rooted in nostalgia for the dying traditions of the bush or it was elsewhere: London, New York, Paris.

Patrick White's immense good fortune was to find his feet as a writer outside this philistine milieu, where the audience for the novels he wanted to write scarcely existed. Instead he found his natural readers in Heubsch, Grigson, Herbert Read, Jean Starr Untermeyer (who translated Hermann Broch), Graham Greene, and Victor Pritchett. By the time war broke out, however, White had reached an impasse in London. He felt he had to escape, and was thinking of immigrating to the United States. Though the war interrupted his work—White served in Greece with the RAF—it cut him loose from being a class-bound Anglo-Australian. In Greece he met Manoly Lascaris, the man whom he called his "sweet reason," and with whom he lived the rest of his life. The war shook the last traces of the dandy from him. By the time he was demobilized he had, as Marr observed, the "indestructible face of an Australian grazier."

White's first masterpiece was *The Aunt's Story*, which Viking published in 1948 and which some people still think is his best book. In his extraordinary portrait of Theodora Goodman, the central character, White articulated his lasting preoccupation with the thin and shifting line between visionary perception and insanity. By the time the novel appeared, White had made the irrevocable decision that released his literary gifts in full: he and Lascaris would go back to Australia. The pair bought a small farm half an hour out of Sydney, where they lived in a kind of genteel poverty, raising schnauzers and goats, and planting a small orchard.

For a time he stopped writing altogether, and then set to work on *The Tree of Man*. It was published in 1955, and two years later *Voss* appeared. Both novels construed Australia from its primary elements of loneliness, harshness, madness, and despair. What Stan and Amy Parker in *The Tree of Man* and the unhinged visionary Voss (loosely based on the Prussian Ludwig Leichhardt, who perished without trace in the Australian desert in 1848) have in common is the relentless, unforgiving nature of their encounter with Australia. With the epic ambition of these two novels, as if the dimensions of his work were in scale with the size of the continent itself, White fully justified his return to Australia, as well as the internal exile he imposed on himself.

The Tree of Man and *Voss* made White famous. And fame amplified the legend of the tyrant in him. The fabled Patrick White was born, the monster who tormented his lover, lashed out at his friends, and despised his country. He was especially horrible when he was writing, and at 3 a.m. would drag suitcases from cupboards demanding that Lascaris leave him. The next day he would beg for forgiveness, entreat him to stay. Lascaris always stayed. "He has a genius. Even he doesn't know where it comes from, but he obeys it. If he needs to rage I am there, and he knows I will forgive him." (Lascaris's love for White seems to echo that of White's childhood nanny Lizzie Clark, who was a moral center, an anchor for him.)

An off-the-cuff remark by a friend was enough to ignite the notorious White temper. When the novelist Thea Astley said in passing that White's protégé Geoffrey Dutton couldn't write, White replied, "fucking malicious bitch," and severed all relations; and later Dutton himself was tossed aside. White loved Sidney Nolan, whom he saw as the great Australian painter whose career paralleled his own, but that didn't stop him from demolishing their thirty-year friendship with a few choice sentences in *Flaws in the Glass*.

All this is painstakingly, even lovingly, recorded in Marr's book, an unusual biography in the sense that it is written with immense affection for its subject but makes no attempt to hide the true man. Marr wrote with White's cooperation, and the reader sometimes feels him looking over his biographer's shoulder. When he read the book just before his death, White remarked, "I think this book should be called the *Monster of All Time*. But I am a monster." Given that White thought it more important to tell the truth than to preserve a friendship, it would have been rank hypocrisy for him to react in any other way. Marr's achievement in reconstructing the seismic nature of White's life is hugely accomplished. I can see only a single significant fault in the book, which may be an aftershock of the savagery of White's later years: Marr was not able to interview Sidney Nolan, who would surely have been able to cast a fascinating light on White during the middle years, in the 1950s and 1960s, when the two men were carving out in tandem the consciousness of their country.

Though he does a thorough job in tracing the sources for White's characters among the people he knew, Marr generally keeps literary analysis of the novels to a minimum. The writer is always in unimpeded view, but we don't get a full account of what it feels like to read his fiction. Like most novelists, White drew relentlessly on aspects of his friends and acquaintances, but he is the opposite of a naturalist: he does not give the reader well-rounded characters seen from the outside. The understanding of the world in White's fiction is oracular, epiphanous. He is a mystic, a romantic intent on what makes things vivid, what makes them precisely themselves. He sees his characters sardonically, sometimes brutally, in luminous fragments. His style is awkward, gaudy, mannered, but not the least bit arty. Here, for example, is Theodora Goodman observing the progress of Mrs. Rapallo in the Hôtel du Midi:

> Her pomp was the pomp of cathedrals and of circuses. She was put together painfully, rashly, ritually, crimson over purple. Her eye glittered, but her breath was gray. Under her great hat, on which a bird had settled years before, spreading its meteoric tail in a landscape of pansies, mignonette, butterflies and shells, her face shrieked with the inspired clowns, peered through the branches of mascara at objects she could not see, and sniffed through thin nostrils at many original smells. Though

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her composition was intended to be static, sometimes Mrs. Rapallo advanced, as now.

Almost every sentence he wrote was in pursuit of consciousness on the move, the flash of revelation. Thus, when Theodora's hotel catches fire:

> She was alone now, in the passage of a hotel, of which wallpaper rejected a long imposed flatness. Walls whipped. All the violence of fire was contained in the hotel. It tossed, whether hatefully or joyfully, it tossed restraint to smoke. Theodora ran, breathing the joy or hatred of fire. She was not certain where. She heard the desperate cockroach pop under foot. Her own report, she supposed, would not be so round or, authorities said, final.
>
> Then the night was thick with quiet stars.... She saw the white faces, or the crowd face, breathing the fire. There are moments when faces are interchangeable. It was one of those. Sparks shot and fell. The flat, flower faces bent on their emotions, swaying to receive some strange pollen of fire.

Marr illuminates how perverse and heroic White was, and how much his life was in the service of his art. "Surely what the writer needs is orthography, grammar, and syntax, which he learns at school," White remarked. "After that he must read and write, read and write, and forgetting all about being a writer, live to perfect his art." He hated writing, he said, but there was nothing he loved that he didn't hate from time to time with a withering ferocity.

The mystery of good literary biography is how it illuminates the work by talking about something else: the dross of existence from which the work arose and which the work transcends. It is hard for biography, which must not invent and is built from the evidence compiled by the world, to uncover the secret life. Much of the time it must confine itself to joining dots provided by others. Its processes of sympathetic imagination depend on principles of detachment, selection, and arrangement. Marr does all this about as well as it can be done. Patrick White now exists for us with the kind of resonance that his strongest characters have. And beyond this marvelous book lie the true remains of his secret life, his dozen or so novels, his plays, and his stories.

MICHAEL HEYWARD's *The Ern Malley Affair* will be published next year by Faber and Faber.

The Tedium is the Message

BY ROBERT BOYERS

The Loser
by Thomas Bernhard
translated by Jack Dawson

(Knopf, 190 pp., $19.95)

"The feeling grows," writes George Steiner, "that Thomas Bernhard is now the most original, concentrated novelist writing in German." He belongs, according to Steiner, "with the great constellation of Kafka, Musil, and Broch." Others agree. To William Kennedy, Bernhard's fiction "a major achievement" that has something important to tell us "about contemporary life, about art, about obsessive commitment to anything." Walter Abish goes so far as to suggest that we may be living in what "in the German-speaking world, at any rate, may soon come to be considered 'the age of Bernhard.'" In the United States Bernhard has not yet won a large audience, but many writers seem to be reading him with enormous, sometimes indiscriminate, admiration.

The object of this cultish enthusiasm, who died in 1989, was the author of more than twenty volumes of fiction and a good many plays as well. As a novelist, Bernhard is typically valued for his extravagance and his sometimes dizzying prose, which often features long rhetorical constructions and a complete absence of paragraphs. Others prize his satirical assault on Austrian society and his violent denunciation of complacent bourgeois parochialism. Above all, Bernhard is valued as a brave explorer of consciousness, a deeply unstable person who yet captures in the rhythms, the exacerbations, and the constrictions of his prose the movement of thought itself. However much Bernhard's narrators may be caught up in self-deception and a variety of neurotic compulsions, they bring us face to face with the vicissitudes

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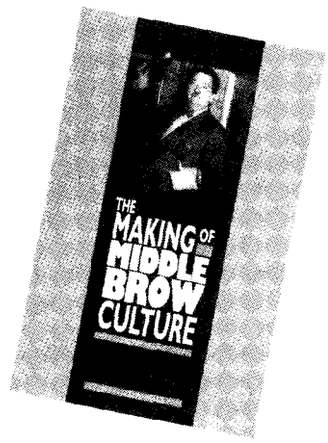

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of consciousness, and they move us by the extremity of their reflections. Or so it is argued.

And indeed, taken selectively, Bernhard can seem an original and disquieting writer. The interminable sentences and the unending paragraphs do reflect a kind of manic virtuosity. Now and then the shrill denunciations strike the reader as terribly funny in their excessiveness. The savage expressions of personal revulsion do sometimes betray a sexual loathing, usually of women, that makes you feel that you are cruising the psychological depths. And yes, there is a certain kind of fascination in watching a mind go to pieces.

There may even be some merit in Bernhard's attacks on Austrian culture. However improbable his charges, the voice in which he fulminates and despises can unsettle us with its alternately gleeful and despondent malice. There is a basis in reality for his fulminations against "the universal cesspit of petit bourgeois mediocrity" or against some of his successful literary contemporaries who are "nothing but devious, ambitious little state protégées ... churning out derivative kitsch for the vilest of motives."

Still, taken as a whole, Bernhard's work seems repetitious, suffocating, impoverished. His characters are, all of them, baffled thinkers, and though they never seem to get anywhere or to confront their difficulties effectually, they inhabit their obsessions with an unwavering insistence. There is a certain amount of variety in Bernhard's standard characters, but it is fair to say that virtually all of them consider themselves demented, devote themselves to self-torment, and get by largely on a diet of bile and envy. The Bernhard landscape is littered with the shadows of human beings more dead than alive.

The impoverishment assumes different forms, but in the end there is not much to choose between one figure and another. In *The Lime Works* (1970), Konrad conducts cruel and absurd auditory experiments on his crippled wife in preparation for a book, *The Sense of Hearing*, that he will never write. In *Concrete* (1982), a narcissistic Viennese musicologist named Rudolph prepares obsessively to write a book on Felix Mendelssohn though for ten years he has been unable to write so much as a sentence. *Woodcutters* (1984) features an unnamed narrator who directs imagined barrages of invective at everyone he meets and bitterly maintains that those who see beauty anywhere live on "dreams and fairy stories" and have "no right to live." Like the other narrators, his isolation is fearful, his emotional paralysis disabling.

Repetition compulsion and emotional impoverishment need not be fatal characteristics for an ambitious novelist who knows how to make them his subject. (One thinks at once of that quintessence of impotence called Samuel Beckett, or of a very different though also brilliantly limited writer like Italo Svevo.) The great problem with Bernhard is that he seems, in the end, to be entirely the helpless servant of his obsessions. He is not writing about pathology, or Austria, or the vicissitudes of consciousness. He is not writing about subjects at all. He is exhibiting symptoms.

It is impossible to dispute Bernhard's occasional brilliance or the sinister music of his diatribes, but one may be forgiven for asking what precisely those musical effects express or enable. From Bernhard's attacks on all things Austrian one learns only that he loathes his own culture with an indiscriminate intensity, and that his narrators typically share with him that inveterate antipathy. From his despair one learns only that he is unhappy, and that his reasons tell us almost nothing of anyone else's propensities or problems. We have almost no idea why Bernhard's narrators are balked in their ambitions, or consumed with rage and envy. They seem merely exotic, like their creator, inimical to analysis, interesting but not exactly significant.

Never do Bernhard's protagonists struggle free of their obsessions or manias. They suffer their condition like a fate, and even their fruitless obsession with study or work is an expression of commitment without point or heart. When they speak they seem in no way responsible for the veracity, the significance, or the plausibility of their remarks. Consider a passage from *The Loser*, which was published in German in 1983 and has been recently issued in an English translation. At one characteristic moment the narrator states that in Austrian prisons "there are more innocent than guilty people," that jurors "always follow the mere whim of a moment in their judgment," and that ordinary persons are typically consumed by "a boundless hatred for their fellowman." No effort is made to defend such assertions, to provide evidence or to construct a coherent profile of Austrian life. The statements have nothing to recommend them but their vehemence, and the air they convey of willful exaggeration. Does the speaker believe what he says? The question often presents itself as we read through Bernhard's novels.

The monologue in Bernhard is an instrument of considerable expressive power, but it proceeds as if vituperation and nightmarish melancholia were their own reason for being. The fellow who speaks in *The Loser* of our "boundless hatred" for one another is almost interchangeable with the narrator of *Wittgenstein's Nephew*, whose criticism of our

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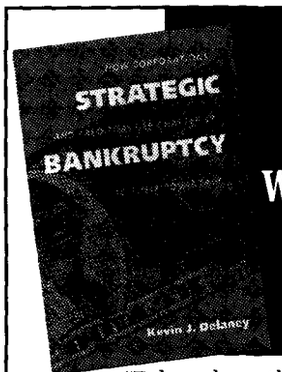

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"totally decrepit modern world" doesn't get much beyond references to "all this stinking constipating clogging intellectual vomit." This is good for some laughs, but it invites neither analysis nor anxious soul-searching.

Or consider the following resonant notion generated by Bernhard's parent-obsessed character Roithamer in *Correction* (1975). "Ninety percent of us die," he says,

> without ever having lived in a world of their own, only and always in a world that was ready-made, presented and adapted to them by their parents' generation, never, please note, in no way and never in their own world, they live and work out their lives in their parents' world, not their own.

Now, the narrator of *Correction*, who is writing an account of his work on the recently deceased Roithamer's papers, is only marginally distinguishable from his late friend, and seems about as comfortable speaking in Roithamer's voice as in his own, so that by novel's end Roithamer's words have entirely taken over the text. Nothing in the novel, therefore, may be said to contradict in an effectual way what Roithamer says. There is nothing here of significant struggle.

If we are inclined to support the idea that most of us never live in a world we have shaped for ourselves, we can take momentary satisfaction in Bernhard's novelistic expression of the idea. If we regard such observations as glib and familiar, we can be amused by the fact that even one of Bernhard's thoroughbred mental cases will now and then light upon the standard platitudes of today's enlightened classes. In neither case does the content of the observation seem notable for thoroughness, subtlety, or originality. And further quotation from Bernhard's novel would reveal no more substantial effort to support his assertions or to show his character involved in the attempt to live in his own world.

It is not just that the same Roithamer who has "enlightened" things to say about living in our own world is also given to scathing remarks on the "lower-middle-class mentality" and the "ill-bred and incorrigible ways" of ordinary people like his own mother. If the Bernhard protagonist were simply a man of many moods and sometimes contradictory ideas, we might still hope to find in his irascible declarations some coherence and some semblance of a serious intent. But the contradictions are rarely in the service of a real insight, and the mood swings betray not a search for something abiding and deep but a willful alternation bespeaking a complacent iconoclasm. "Offend against so-called good taste," Roithamer urges, as if "good taste," at this late date, is still the name of some dominant coercive regime against which free spirits must continue to measure their exertions. Dare to confess—so Roithamer also urges—that "supreme happiness comes only in death," as if such knowledge were not principally the province of one consumed by hatred, committed to "aberration" and "destruction."

To accept Bernhard entirely on his own terms is to accept that the exhibition of symptoms, if sufficiently colorful, can be a fully valid object for the novel. Is that so? Or must the novel accomplish something more? Is it enough that a character demonstrate in every sentence his forlornness, or must we demand that he show us how he came to be so desperate, or that he struggles not simply to remain alive but to understand the meaning of his life? In *The Lime Works* we read again and again that "in the end" everything is "senseless," that "a rational man tended to leave things alone to develop however they would," that it is hopeless to struggle against despair: over and over we are told of the senselessness of work, of personal relationships, of existence itself. And we are persuaded that Bernhard's character means what he says, has paid the price in anguish and the inability to bring anything to fruitful completion. But we are also persuaded that when we are through with Bernhard's character, we understand no more about the forces vying within most of us than we did before, and that we cannot be adequately moved by a condition so without the possibility of amelioration or adjustment.

In making the case for Bernhard, critics have described his work as "a paradigm of consciousness," an enactment of "negation," as "a philosophical quest." They have invoked Bernhard's affinities with the great philosophical novelists in the Austrian tradition, particularly Musil and Broch. To be sure, there are passages in Bernhard of considerable intellectual cunning, in which the effort to think is strenuously embodied in a language of manic exacerbation. But when we remember the range and the penetration of the philosophical ideas generated by Musil in *The Man Without Qualities*, we are perhaps surprised that anyone wishing to make the case for Bernhard should be eager to invite comparison with his famous predecessor.

Correction may well seem to most readers the least accessible, the most infuriatingly repetitious of Bernhard's works, but it is probably the most esteemed of his novels, and the one most likely to support the case for Bernhard as a

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philosophical novelist. It also presents several plausible examples of what is meant when we say that a Bernhard novel embodies "the effort to think." Central to this novel is the trope of correction itself, and it is fair to say that at no other point does Bernhard press home a trope with so seductive a philosophical coloration. "We're constantly correcting, and correcting ourselves, most rigorously," the character Roithamer assures us, recognizing as we do "at every moment that we did it all wrong ... that everything to this point in time is a falsification," only to discover that we have been moving all along toward the "ultimate existential correction"—which is "suicide." Elsewhere Roithamer dithers on with more anxious talk of the "correction of the correction of the correction of the correction." For a time, we attend to this idea as if it might yield something important, and we do surely accept that Bernhard's entire novel reflects an anxious desire to think through to something unnameable. But the novel aims to correct its understanding and its representation of phenomena that it has no capacity to represent or to understand. Offering neither a vivid depiction of a world nor a palpable display of the objects of consciousness, *Correction* shows us only a mind locked on a single idea it has no way to embody or even to struggle toward.

Of course, there are some for whom this talk of correction seems still a clear instance of fiction used "as an instrument of philosophy," for whom it is even tempting to conclude that, philosophically speaking, repetition compulsion is the most authentic expression of thought we have. Thus Sven Birkerts has written in these pages that Bernhard's Wittgensteinian philosophers "proceed by way of repetitions because thought cannot hope to penetrate reality in any other way." But we may well wonder not only whether this easy pessimism is valid, but whether a Bernhard novel even begins to test such a hypothesis. Surely no one any longer expects a novel to unfold like a straightforward argument or an accretion of evidence, but there is a difference between a circularity that leads nowhere and a philosophical novel that actually means to think through its obsessions. If we are to accept that thought cannot hope to penetrate reality by, say, examining what it wishes to understand, then we must demand of a serious philosophical novelist some effort to look at and to organize what seems so impenetrable. Lacking some sense of that enterprise, we can only reject the claim that the work of philosophical thought or "correction" has actually been done.

The Loser is the seventh of Bernhard's novels published in the United States, and though no one would think to describe it as a philosophical novel, it is a mix of the usual Bernhardian elements, combining satire, rant, drone, internal contradiction, emotional paralysis, and occasional zany anecdotage. Here the narrator finds himself alone, having lost his friends Glenn Gould and a disappointed "loser" named Wertheimer, the latter a recent suicide. The narrative, such as it is, may best be described as the story of a lifelong "friendship," in the course of which Bernhard draws upon and flagrantly distorts elements of three biographies: his own, Glenn Gould's, and Ludwig Wittgenstein's (upon which Wertheimer is very loosely modeled).

Both the narrator and Wertheimer are ruined in some deep and inexplicable way by their closeness to Gould, who unwittingly makes them feel inadequate as musicians and unworthy as human beings. Fearful "of not being taken seriously," Wertheimer loathes his life and does nothing to change it. The narrator, remarking his friend's pathetic futility, now and again associates himself with Gould's strength and his indifference to the good opinion of mankind, though typically he regards his own activity as "nonsense" and often climbs "to the top of Monks' Mountain with the intention of hurling myself into the void." Convinced that to be ordinary is to be mediocre, unable to accept that an honorable life can be built around modest virtues, Bernhard's narrator invents and idealizes Gould's ruthlessness and his abhorrence of other human beings. His own contribution to the world runs to such observations as "The climate in the lower alps makes for emotionally disturbed people who fall victim to cretinism at a very early age."

What Bernhard gains in *The Loser* by shortening his sentences and curbing his appetite for relentless self-contradiction he squanders by permitting us to feel that the material before us is terribly thin. Frustrated ambition seems somehow inconsequential when it belongs to persons who do nothing but snipe and stew. So, too, is suicide in Bernhard a fact without the power to haunt or to astonish, cast as it is in the form of a standard predisposition, as "natural" in certain characters as the desire to prosper is in most human beings. As for "the generally grotesque absurdity of human existence," what may be said to save this "insight" from the resonant emptiness we attribute to other existentialist commonplaces?

The Loser offers an unsparing portrayal of an obsession. That much is certain. The name of that obsession may appear to be music, or Glenn Gould, or art, or genius, but in fact it is the same obsession that afflicts all of Bernhard's important characters, formulated here as the desire "to escape ourselves." For this, however, Bernhard's characters have no aptitude. Human existence seems to them grotesque and absurd because it tempts them to imagine a release that grows ever more impossible. In *The Loser*, Bernhard's narrator is drawn to Gould as an exemplary figure who has escaped absurdity at the price of turning himself into an art machine that has "nothing in common with human beings anymore."

In another writer, this observation might convey a certain pathos. In Bernhard, it conveys only the narrator's sense that human beings don't amount to much and that one does well to resemble them as little as possible. Here and there—one thinks of certain pages in *Woodcutters*—Bernhard evokes genuine interest in, even a feeling for, other persons. In *The Loser*, by contrast, there is only envy, need, impotence, isolation. One sees not "the general absurdity of human existence," but the determined incapacity of particular characters to imagine for themselves anything more than they have. Bernhard's narrator and his "loser" friend envy in Gould not an alternative to the lives they have wasted, but a singleness of purpose that ostensibly exempts its possessor from pain, misgiving, or any thought of attachment.

The Loser, like other Bernhard novels, spins helplessly in its own tracks. And yet it evokes no quality of nightmare or dread: the narrator has lived so long and so complacently in his grim state that one can fear no further reduction in his condition. There is a difference, after all, between hysteria and authentic literary power, as there is between rant and eloquence, between iconoclasm and surprise. Occasionally in Bernhard one feels a surge of energy to oppose death, but more frequently one hears the numbing, benumbed, dying fall of a voice that is barely able to sustain itself, or us. When in other works we sometimes see, even occasionally fear, a mind going to pieces, here we have only a settled disposition with which the narrator, for all his talk of death, is obviously comfortable.

ROBERT BOYERS is professor of English at Skidmore College and the editor of *Salmagundi*. His most recent book is *After the Avant Garde: Essays in Art and Culture* (Penn State University Press).

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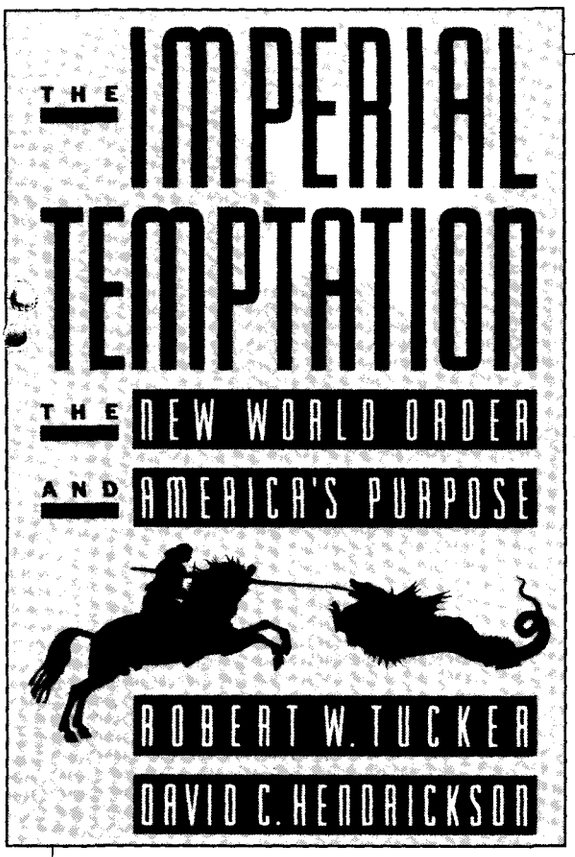

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Trash

AT THE WASHINGTON AREA'S MOST politically correct exhibit you can't rent fancy headsets to help guide you through. In fact, they pass out yellow earplugs before the tour begins. The place lacks the intellectual cachet of the National Gallery and the romance of the Air and Space Museum, and it's miles from the Mall, but it draws occasional tourists along with lots of Brownies, school groups, and civic-minded suburbanites. It's the new Montgomery County Recycling Center, the chief attraction of which is its German-built, state-of-the-art $8.4 million magnetic trash sorter. Through a clinking, shuddering maze of conveyor belts, chutes, and rotating chain curtains, it separates glass, plastic, metal, and "contaminants," the first stage in the eventual transformation of discarded plastic Evian bottles into polyester carpet and tennis ball containers.

I RECENTLY MOVED OUT OF THE District after fourteen years and wasn't prepared for the suburban trash revolution. In D.C. recycling quickly became another typical government operation, crippled by personnel troubles, missed deadlines, and jaded citizens, who assumed (correctly) that a city that struggles over snow removal would be overwhelmed by an enterprise as cumbersome and demanding as recycling. D.C.'s recycling law went into effect years ago, but no one seems to know just what the requirements are, and the city's stern warnings about punishing offenders have been met with derision. At TNR the tiny cardboard containers that were issued for recycling white paper are buried in most offices beneath reports, books, and manuscripts, and by the end of each day the communal newspaper receptacles hold everything from empty Coke cans to half-eaten lunches in plastic food containers. And, not surprisingly, the District has turned out to be the worst offender of all: it has been sued by the Sierra Club and Common Cause for failing to implement its own law.

YOU WON'T FIND ANY SUCH BACKsliding in Montgomery County, where residents have quickly risen to the challenge of mandatory curbside recycling. (The county recycling coordinator proudly cites a compliance rate of 80 to 95 percent.) Upon arrival we were greeted with a sturdy green, fourteen-gallon recycle bin and an arsenal of brochures and newsletters providing peppy advice and exhaustive lists of the dos and don'ts of recycling. Somewhat ashamed of my cavalier attitude toward garbage, I affixed our town's recycling flyer to the refrigerator for periodic consultation. Cans, glass jars, and clear and colored plastic bottles stamped on the bottom with a triangular recycling symbol enclosing a 1 or 2 must be rinsed and placed in the green bin; deli containers with a number 7 may not. Monday and Friday are the pickups for yard trash; Monday and Thursday for household; Wednesday for recyclables. For any additional information you can call the Master Recyclers Hotline, though one helpful volunteer was at a loss when I asked how to dispose of fallen tree limbs that are too large to qualify as "small brush" (four to six feet in length, no more than four inches in diameter). After consulting another master recycler she said with a laugh, "You can always drive them out to the country and leave them where they'll fit in." After removing the bark and dry cleaning them, of course.

MY SENSE OF WONDER AT THE spectacle of an engaged citizenry and local government united in the war against waste was dampened a bit by a recent house guest. He's an environmental economist who has just written a report called "Market-Based Strategies for Waste Management," and he dismissed Montgomery County's entire "command and control" approach as "crazy." He pointed out that it offers no monetary incentive for *reducing* one's garbage, and said, reasonably enough, that people should be expected to pay proportionally for the trash they generate. The real avant-garbage scene is in Seattle, which has imposed a pay-as-you-throw fee on residents—and where zealous citizens, in a move dubbed "the Seattle stomp," jump up and down on their trash in an effort to reduce its bulk. But not to worry. Montgomery County is planning a pilot project along these lines. Meanwhile, I guess I'll continue rinsing, balling up, and tossing my used aluminum foil into the bin. And in January I'll pick up some free mulch generated by ground-up Christmas trees. It's less trouble than the Seattle stomp, and smells better too.

TRUE SCANDALS HAVE BEEN IN short supply this campaign season, and the press has been showing signs of strain. Bill Clinton likes to complain about being savaged by the media, but the truth is he's gotten off pretty easily—certainly by the standards of nineteenth-century mud-slinging. Everyone keeps returning to the same half-dozen or so alleged misdeeds, dredged up lately from old Arkansas newspaper clips. Back in the 1800s politicians and the press were less fastidious about scurrilous attacks and blatant untruths. Take the campaign of 1828, which was similarly fixated on the character issue, and which also relied heavily on innuendo from the contenders' past. Supporters of the democratic candidate, Andrew Jackson, spread the word through partisan papers that the aristocratic incumbent, John Quincy Adams—a politician obsessed with moral propriety—was a gambler who was shamelessly squandering public money. (He'd bought an ivory chess set and a billiard table for the White House, at a total cost of $82.) More shocking, it was said that while he was minister to Russia, Adams had acted as a pimp for Czar Alexander. He purportedly "pandered" by offering the czar the sexual services of his son's Boston nursemaid. Meanwhile, the followers of Adams attacked Jackson as an illiterate, an atheist, and a murderer. An enterprising Philadelphia journalist went so far as to distribute the "Coffin Handbill," which described Jackson's execution of six mutinous militiamen during the War of 1812. Then it was reported that Mrs. Jackson was a "convicted adulteress," a charge so vicious that it precipitated her death. And it didn't stop there. While reading the papers one day, Jackson reportedly burst into tears when he came upon a story that declared: "General Jackson's mother was a COMMON PROSTITUTE, brought to this country by the British soldiers! She afterward married a MULATTO MAN, with whom she had several children, of which number General JACKSON IS ONE!" Then again, maybe things haven't changed that much. There was that article in the *Globe* tabloid accusing Clinton of having sired his own mulatto love child. Still, to my knowledge no one has yet announced that he IS ONE!

DOROTHY WICKENDEN

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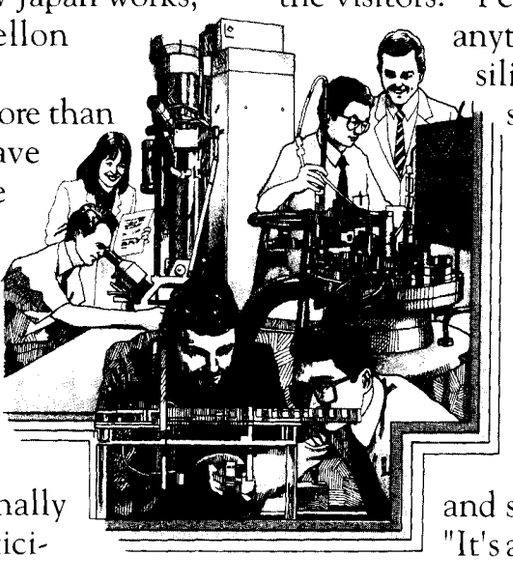
Where U.S. Researchers Find a Home Away From Home In Japan

Researchers are adventurers at heart. So it's no surprise that when Hitachi invited materials scientist Dr. Joseph O. Artman to spend six months this year working at its Central Research Laboratory (HCRL) in Tokyo, he eagerly accepted. "It gave me an opportunity to work in a new area, magneto-optics, and to see for myself how Japan works," recalls the Carnegie Mellon University professor.



Dr. Artman is one of more than 40 U.S. scientists who have worked in Japan over the last six years as participants in Hitachi's Research Visit Programs (HIVIPS). The programs aim to advance science through collaborative research and to enrich participants' lives personally and professionally. Participants work side-by-side with Hitachi scientists on basic problems in electronics and information systems.

For Dr. C.A. Cain, chairman of the University of Michigan's Bioengineering Program, HIVIPS proved a welcome sabbatical. "For the first time in years, I was able to pursue new ideas without interruption," he says. "In my time there, I basically defined my research directions for the next five years."

HIVIPS participants were struck by the effort to make them feel at home in Japan. "One of the nicest things about the program was the friends I made," says Dr. Cain. "We still do joint research and exchange visits," he adds.

HCRL's research facilities impressed the visitors. "I could do just about anything to a piece of silicon that I wanted to," says John Snyder, a Stanford University doctoral student in electrical engineering, who worked on a new kind of transistor. The visitors also appreciated the natural beauty of HCRL's campus,with its goldfish-stocked lake and sheltering woodlands. "It's an oasis of calm in Tokyo," says Dr. Cain.

Hitachi is proud to sponsor the HIVIPS program. We believe that it can make a significant contribution to science, to its participants' lives, and to a better understanding between the U.S. and Japan.

For more information, write: Hitachi, P.O. Box 7515, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

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